

# fifth estate

Radical publishing since 1965

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## Fifth Estate

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With the defeat of the White Christian Nationalist Party in the U.S. presidential election, liberals and progressives are understandably relieved that the politics of racism, misogyny, xenophobia, and the rest of the right-wing panoply were rejected by American voters, even if only by a fairly small percentage. We share that sense, but hold no illusions about the second term of Barack Obama containing any possibility for authentic hope or change, or even mild reform.

Not a minute after the election results were announced, the two parties of the ruling class began talking about the need to "compromise" on questions of the budget and social programs. Read correctly, this means the continuing transfer of wealth to the 1%, austerity policies for the remainder of the population, and maintenance of the empire abroad.

What is needed is the creation of autonomous movements to resist these attacks, but as important, is the building of structures that operate outside the confines of capitalism and begin a reconstruction of a human-oriented society.

This issue on Education offers several models of the latter, particularly the alternative schools on a small scale, but also the resistance of the Quebec students and their allies to tuition hikes which created a mass movement of resistance.

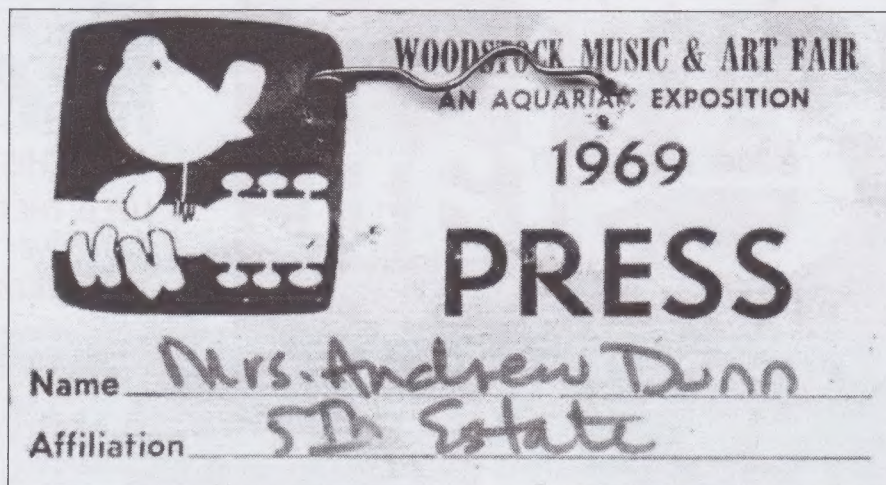
Many thanks to all of those who participated in making this issue possible from readers and subscribers, to those who volunteered their time and talents, and to our Sustainers whose extra support is so important.

**fifth  
estate**

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Woodstock Music Festival, 1969. The Fifth Estate was in its fourth year of publication and was part of counter-culture music scene as much as the anti-war and resistance movements of the times. The festival gave the then-tabloid paper press passes and bought a full-page ad.

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### On the Cover

Stephen Goodfellow's art once again graces our front page as it has in numerous previous issues. The Non Serviam ball is also his creation. See [goodfellowweb.com](http://goodfellowweb.com)

Magazine design: Zach Kozdron [behance.net/zachkozdrn](http://behance.net/zachkozdrn)

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# Letters

## Our readers respond

### Florida Kollektive

I'm writing on behalf of our small and growing collective in northeast Florida.

We are focusing our grass-roots efforts on organizing community projects with friends throughout the state and are preparing to launch a new project focusing on distributing literature. With our projects, and our lives, we embrace cooperative models and combat the capitalist mentality.

Our project begins with an old school bus. We are converting it into a mobile info-shop which we call The Radical Book Mobile. It will be a mobile distribution center of promotional/educational material for local and regional interest groups; our own printed material and a variety of new and used books.

We intend to provide access to literature because we believe in the power of an educated populous. Capital should not be an obstacle for educating oneself and so we will ask only for a suggested donation for the items we stock. We will always welcome barter, trade, and even gift to insure people have access to the knowledge they seek.

Similarly in our build out of the bus, we are using salvaged materials and donations from people who want to support the project.

While we are gathering materials, merchandise and building the book mobile we are holding info-fairs every weekend at our kollektive house in Jacksonville. We are distributing print media from the Slingshot Collective in Berkeley, the *Earth First! Journal* from Lake Worth, Florida, the *Fifth Estate* from Detroit, several other independent publishers, and have donated our personal libraries to get momentum going. We'd like to develop working relationships with other publishers and collectives and distribute works and titles which may be available.

Please let us know if you're interested in helping us get started and how best to open the channels of contribution and communication. We can be reached via email from [kairoskollektive@riseup.net](mailto:kairoskollektive@riseup.net), our project website is [burnpilebooks.wordpress.com](http://burnpilebooks.wordpress.com).

com, 700 East Union St., Box 10, Jacksonville FL 32206, or call us at (904) 701-Dolt.

**Siddhi**

Riverside (Jacksonville), Fla.

### Portrait Origin

The final page of *Fifth Estate's* Spring 2012 issue featured a drawing of a man named Coyote, who wrote upon it of his life experience as a member of the commune and intentional community Twin Oaks, located in the White Oak Forest, east of Appalachia.

Initially unbeknownst to FE's editors this piece occurred as a "Portrait-Story," specifically part of a series of over 600 originals called "Voices for Appalachia – A Portrait-Story Project Written and Narrated by Hundreds" (active 16 months altogether between March 2008 and November 2009).

The collection is largely about residents' folk, family and bioregional connection with their land, the resistance movement against mountain range removal coal "mining" and towards a future beyond reckless extraction industries.

See [voiceforappalachia.org](http://voiceforappalachia.org).

Of interest to anti-authoritarians in a climate-destabilized world, "The Post-Katrina Portraits: Written and Narrated by Hundreds," (active 13 consecutive months, September 2005 onward) largely shows a stateless disaster relief effort.

And, just in case one believes that overt self-determinationist expression can only form as reaction to grievance: [facesomadtown.org](http://facesomadtown.org).

Also, the little known Black Bloc Portraits almost immediately precursored (amongst other works) what became formalized as The Portrait-Story Project: see [dc.indymedia.org/newswire/display/115903/index.php](http://dc.indymedia.org/newswire/display/115903/index.php).

Given explicit grassroots political will, such a broadly participatory art and story documentary project could emerge anywhere. See [portraitsstoryproject.org](http://portraitsstoryproject.org) for reifying details.

Informed inquiries may go to [wanderer@riseup.net](mailto:wanderer@riseup.net).

### The Portrait-Story Project bottomliner

**Fifth Estate Note:** Thank you for clearing up the origin of the graphic and story we printed, and for its history.

We received the graphic and story

directly from Coyote who is a subscriber and supporter of the Fifth Estate. He didn't submit it for inclusion in our issue, but we did so without mentioning it to him as somewhat of an intended surprise. It's good to know that it is part of a much larger project.

### Zerzan in London

I made it to the talk that John Zerzan gave at London's Raven Row Gallery in August. [See article on John's talk on P. 10.]

It was interesting and generally well received from what I could tell, although I expect most that came were familiar with his work. There were a number of interesting questions afterwards that got built on from the talk. I might try and get back there and have a look at the *Fifth Estate* back issues if the show is still running!

Quite strange that there was so little protest around the Olympics, either against the event itself or just to use that as an opportunity in terms of coverage. There was a huge police operation to stop any form of protest, and known protesters may have been sent threatening letters before the games started.

The security operation behind the games was quite a scary prospect, including the level of surveillance. Apparently, they have lampposts installed with mics that can pick up specific conversations. George Orwell eat your heart out!

I don't know in any detail what the anarchist response was, as I am fairly recently new to these ideas myself. Perhaps the mood of national optimism swept the anarchist circles as well. If so, lets hope it doesn't last too long!

**Tim Francey**  
London

### The Free is Free!

Congrats on your excellent Summer 2012 issue, especially the Summer Reading sections. I noticed no anarchist novels were included; a pity as I'm promoting *The Free*, 2012 edition, which would have been perfect.

*Fifth Estate* gave the novel, set during an anarchist revolution in the collapse of capitalism, a Wow! review when it first came



## Letters

out in 1986. It was written by E.B. Maple, who I understand is still in your collective under his real name.

The new version of this anarcha-feminist adventure, which is a free download linked to a blog on the theme, is twice as long and leads us, with the neighbourhood collectives and free unions, right through capitalist collapse, climate chaos, and a violent, joyful, sexy and often hilarious social revolution and into a budding money-free world.

While yet to go viral, *The Free* has been acclaimed on its blog, thefreeonline.wordpress.com, with over 100,000 visitors, mostly to the relating themes, plus 2,600 Friends of *The Free* on its Facebook page. facebook.com/thefree.mikegilli You can free-download also for e-book and phone readers on the blog.

Some academic anarchists scoff at novels, but this one is perfect for learning and study as well. As all the classic ideas take place in the background story, they are referenced to the relevant books you can link to, and also free download from the Anarchist Library.

So, if you're curious, especially if you're a wage or mortgage slave, or if you're female or gay, check it out. *The Free* will clarify your plans on what to do as our crazy system and mistreated climate fall apart around us!

All the best and hope you're still revolting,

**M. Gilliland**  
Barcelona

**Walker Lane responds:** Mike is being kind. Not having fiction reviews in our edition on Anarchist Summer Reading is a hole in what is available for not just our ideas, but for what emotions the genre elicits in a reader. I read *The Free* and wrote the review in these pages over 25 years ago, yet many of its scenes still stand out vividly in my mind. I highly recommend it.

### Viability of Violence

Greetings from the Texas gulag! As always, I thoroughly enjoyed your superb magazine and read the Spring 2012 edition cover to cover before passing it around to my literate comrades

However, I must take strong exception to John Zerzan's take on the viability of violence as a tactic in the promotion of

revolutionary values [see "Vagaries of the Left"].

Like it or not, the American people, and, indeed, most people of the Western world, have been pointedly conditioned since infancy to view private property as sacrosanct. Destruction of that property, even in a worthy cause, and used as a propaganda tool, is almost inevitably counterproductive and only serves to alienate the forces for good.

Violence can be a great tool when you have superior numbers and arms, but until a critical number of sleeping people wake up to the predatory and unsustainable nature of capitalism-imperialism, the reactionary forces will continue to use it because it works in tandem with the corporate owned media's spin machine.

That photo of the California campus cop pepper spraying unarmed, peaceful student protesters did more to wake up people than a thousand smashed windows. Zerzan should ask himself, if violence promotes progress, why do reactionary forces use agents provocateurs when violence isn't present?

Our hope lies solely in the waking up of "the hundredth monkey" to our toxic situation. Violence only prolongs the sleep.

Yours for a peaceful revolution,

**Richard Ostrander**  
Huntsville, Texas

**John Zerzan responds:** I doubt that the image of people passively being pepper-sprayed did much of anything to embolden or inspire others to resistance. I admire their courage and, yes, it exposed the pigs, but does playing the victim really help us move forward?

There is really no way around the move to targeted property damage, as I see it. Property is sacrosanct but the move to actual resistance is necessary. We must go

through that barrier, overcome the initial antipathy.

ELF and ALF actions have been effective, it seems to me, especially when accompanied by lucid communiqués explaining the necessity of physical attacks on oppressive targets.

Sticking with play-the-protest game tactics that obey the rules is no substitute for moving forward in real ways. I don't see property destruction as violent, by the way. Can inanimate objects, say, a building, be violated?

Maybe quite a few more than you think are ready for break-out tactics, will respect resistance over obedience.

### Homophobic Lyrics

When I recorded my album "Dissent" in December 2011, I wanted it to represent the philosophical underpinnings that make up my anarchism. What I did not want it to represent was any form of bigotry.

Unfortunately, my hip-hop background and my anarchism had not merged into a cohesive whole (still trying to figure out how best to employ the latter with the former), as is evidenced in the song, "Hate Me," which Paul J. Comeau, in his review of "Dissent" in the Summer 2012 *FE*, chose to pinpoint for my use of homophobic slurs to denigrate those I am critical of.

I took Paul's review pretty hard at first and felt like I was being attacked. Naively, I had trouble seeing that even though homophobic slurs are often heard in hip-hop music (the clichéd, "everybody says it") they are still homophobic slurs, same as an ethnic or racial slur.

Since I am not a homophobe or antigay I should not employ words that are. I was also upset because this was my first review in an anarchist publication. I was not too excited that my first impression would be that of a gay-basher. But, I do not think that was overtly stated by Paul and was more me being über-defensive.

I would agree that "there is no place in anarchism for homophobia." It took this little encounter to see that this applied to myself as well and that the language I was using was inherently homophobic, whether I had realized it or not.

**Spanish**  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

### We welcome your opinions

Please send us your comments and ideas about what we have published by letter (typed or handwritten), email, or social media.

Address information is at our website:  
[www.fifthestate.org](http://www.fifthestate.org)



# Anarchist Violence or State Vilolence?

Anarchists are portrayed as the boogeyman by the media, but governments are the real source of organized violence.

BY WALKER LANE

The question of violence as a revolutionary tactic is neither new nor unfairly associated with anarchists, although debate has recently emerged over its use by Black Blocs during mass demonstrations, including Occupy events [See FE, Summer 2012; John Zerzan, "The Vagaries of the Left."]

However, many are quick to insist that breaking bank windows or torching police cars doesn't constitute violence but rather should more precisely be described as property damage or political vandalism [Hey, the original Vandals carried out a final blow to a pretty nasty empire].

Violence is what the cops employ against not just Black Bloc participants, who are usually fleet of foot enough to escape it, but frequently in random attacks against people at demonstrations who are committing neither violence nor property damage. Or, provocateurs are employed to unleash the cops on protesters. Violence from the official protectors of property has been so severe that demonstrators have been severely injured and even killed.

Black Blocs at large demonstrations, such as at anti-war rallies or meetings of the imperial chieftains of the G20 countries, are usually comprised of young people who either cohere spontaneously and are drawn to one another, or with some prior planning, attack symbols of the state and/or capitalism.

## Upsurge of Militant Tactics

Sometimes, the actions of the Black Bloc are only a footnote to larger marches, but on other occasions, such as the 1999 Seattle anti-WTO actions, it was a relatively small number breaking windows at Starbucks that thrust them into public consciousness and launched the most recent upsurge of militant tactics against the institutions of capitalism.

While Seattle set in motion dozens of subsequent actions by black-clad militants, it also allowed the creation of an official hysteria which is conveniently used as an excuse for the militarization of the police and justification for brutal tactics of suppression of even peaceful demonstrators where no Black Bloc is present.

At a demonstration in Detroit in 2000 protesting a meeting of the Organization of American States across the border in Windsor, Ontario, one thousand marchers were met by almost as many police who were ordered to wear long sleeved shirts in the June heat claiming they had received intelligence that demonstrators were preparing to splash acid on their arms. The local papers featured headlines howling that "anarchists from Seattle" were coming to Detroit to "burn the city down." All of the marches were

peaceful.

During the 2003 anti-Free Trade Area of the Americas protests in Miami, the cops shuttered the entire downtown area for two weekdays and brought out armaments enough to fight off an army.

## Bizarre Scene

The bizarre scene, in one case, of union retirees, some in wheelchairs and others using walkers, marching by armored personnel carriers manned by battle-ready helmeted cops with .30 caliber machine guns at the ready was almost laughable if it wasn't for the fact that this has become an acceptable stance for the cops and their state and media approved violence.

Over-reaction though it may be, store owners and bankers expect the police to keep their shop windows intact while those who want to bust them up have a different perspective on the sanctity of property.

Some in the Black Bloc enter the streets with a specific political perspective, while others may be just expressing rage at the way society is constructed and think "busting shit up" is a relatively reasonable response to those institutions which are responsible for the current state of affairs.

All societies are governed by rules set by the dominate class and regulate what is permissible behavior regarding terms of social alteration. A political thrust, such as anarchism, that has as a goal the elimination of the basic definitions of this society and who sets them is obviously considered illegitimate in the eyes of the rulers.



From the Black Bloc Portraits series; depictions of those who wear masks for political reasons, drawn in charcoal and graphite, with captions written by those who posed for the series. See "Letters" on page 2 for links and visit [portraitstoryproject.org](http://portraitstoryproject.org) for more.



- One strand of thought, sometimes implied or stated, is that if you dare to break one rule—such as breaking a window—the perpetrator is that much more likely to have fewer qualms about breaking the fundamental rules.

Organizers of what are designated as “peaceful, legal demonstrations” rage against the Black Bloc or others who won’t abide by their definition. They charge that the militants “hijack” their events, distort their message, give the cops an excuse to attack marchers, and cause the media to only focus on political vandalism rather than their ills to end a war or protest against some economic or social outrage.

There’s undoubtedly truth in their complaints, but without the Black Bloc actions many protest events would have gone unreported and unremembered.

Organizers of the Seattle anti-WTO demonstration complained that the vandalism of a handful of anarchists overshadowed the 60,000 trade unionists, environmentalists and other peace and social justice activists that participated in legal marches and non-violent civil disobedience.

This is true and it’s not.

Without the militant actions, it’s doubtful whether the larger marches and actions would have even made the nightly news. Also, is corporate media coverage the ultimate goal? That somehow, if we appear on the corporate media for 20 seconds to present a usually garbled message of reform, let alone revolution, before the program goes to a commercial for vinyl replacement windows and the sportscaster returns with the scores, we will have had a successful demonstration?

### The Timid Left

Criticizing the Black Bloc or independent anarchist trashing will most probably be ignored by those most likely to carry it out. To them, to do so, only marks you as part of the timid left who lets the state define what is permissible. Complaining about the Black Bloc is like shaking your fist at the rain clouds which have ruined your picnic; it’s beyond our control.

However, it seems that some questions need to be posed to those who want to go beyond the prescribed limits at large marches: Do those who alter the nature of a “legal, peaceful” event by their actions bear any responsibility to the organizers or others attending a demonstration?

Do those who initiate militant actions have a responsibility to those who are unaware that the tactics of a few may lead to a violent assault by the police? Is there a responsibility when ratcheting up the use of militant tactics that they may

increase repressiveness in general?

Also, when the state repressive apparatus weighs in against those taking part in militant actions—the cops on the street and the judicial and prison system—what are the effects on those who run afoul of them and on the communities from which they come?

Should those choosing militants acts consider the consequences and responses required of friends, family, and comrades?

Should everyone be advised to never commit acts that could bring about detrimental results? This is certainly contrary to the advice revolutionaries across the ages have heeded.

### Only Damaging property

Actually, everyone from store owners to the cops and the politicians ought to be thankful that

“...everyone from store owners to the cops and the politicians ought to be thankful that the Black Bloc centers its actions on property wreckage.”

the Black Bloc centers its actions on property wreckage. In eras gone by, anarchists took a much greater toll on the guardians and owners of property and capital. The current Black Bloc, however, comport themselves with a dedication to only damaging property.

Think of the 1886 Chicago Haymarket Square incident where those fighting for the 8-hour day, led by anarchists, were urged in a leaflet, “Workingmen, Arm Yourself and Appear in Full Force!” And, they did, including someone, now widely considered to be an anarchist, threw a bomb into the midst of the Chicago police where the blast and subsequent gunfire from both sides resulted in the death of seven cops and four civilians with scores wounded.

Throughout Europe, from the 1870s through the 1930s, anarchists often participated in Propaganda by the Deed, so-called exemplary acts of violence against tyrants both for retaliatory and agitational purposes. Kings, czars, politicians (including a U.S. president), religious figures, and capitalists were the frequent targets, and fell at the hands of anarchist assassins. These acts led to a vivid association, aided by a sensationalist press, between anarchism and violence.

In the U.S., the image of a dark, bearded man, dressed in black hat and clothing, carrying a round bomb with a lit fuse resonated with a native population fearful of foreign anarchists bent on violence. And, this stereotype wasn’t entirely born

of invention.

Followers of Luigi Galleani, mostly Italian immigrants who read his *Cronaca Sovversiva*, in which he advocated direct action and armed resistance against the state, acted on his theories in a series of bombings between 1914 and 1933. Galleanists fostered numerous attacks against prominent American ruling class figures and police, killing and injuring many.

The culmination of an intense bombing campaign around World War I and its domestic repression came when Mario Buda, a Galleanist, in 1920, drove a wagon filled with explosives onto New York City’s Wall Street which detonated killing 38 and wounding 148. Later, into the early 1930s, revenge was sought for the judicial murder of Galleanists Sacco and Vanzetti with attempts on the lives of the trial judge, police, and prison

officials connected to the case.

It should be realized, however, that those who perpetrated violence against the rulers and their minions weren’t the madmen portrayed in the capitalist press during that period. They acted within a context of state violence much greater than any toll exacted by the assassinations and bombings listed here.

### Inter-imperialist Slaughter

Anarchist actions were minor when compared to the repression, massacres, wars, imprisonment and other outrages carried out by the state against the working class. The body count from all anarchist bombings would barely fill a hospital ward when compared to the inter-imperialist slaughter of World War I.

Anarchists were condemned by the press and politicians for advocating violence to achieve their ends. However, one finds calls for violent repression of strikers in headlines and in speeches quite common place, and which were acted upon by cops, troops, and goons.

None of this is meant as a justification of either violence or vandalism; every person will have to decide the efficacy of such acts themselves. However, the late British anarchist Vernon Richards put forth the ethical imperative in *Lessons of the Spanish Revolution* that an unarmed person should never be harmed.



## Propaganda of the Deed A chronology of anarchist violence

**1892** – Alexander Berkman attempts to kill American industrialist Henry Clay Frick in retaliation for breaking the Homestead Strike.

**1893** – Santiago Salvador throws two bombs into a Barcelona theatre, killing twenty people and injuring others.

**1893** – Auguste Vaillant throws a nail bomb in the French National Assembly. His last words before execution were "Death to the Bourgeoisie! Long live Anarchy!"

**1894** – Émile Henry, to avenge Vaillant's execution, sets off a bomb in a café, killing one and injuring twenty. During his trial, he declares, "There are no innocent bourgeois."

**1894** – Geronimo Caserio, seeking revenge for Vaillant and Henry, stabs to death the President of France, Sadi Carnot.

**1897** – Michele Angiolillo shoots Spanish Prime Minister Antonio Cánovas del Castillo, seeking vengeance for the imprisonment and torture of revolutionaries.

**1898** – Luigi Lucheni stabs to death Empress Elisabeth, the consort of Emperor Franz Joseph I of Austria-Hungary, in Geneva.

**1900** – Gaetano Bresci shoots Umberto I dead, seeking revenge for a massacre in Milan.

**1901** – Leon Czolgosz shoots U.S. President William McKinley in Buffalo.

**1902** – Gennaro Rubino attempts to kill King Leopold II of Belgium.

**1906** – Mateu Morral tries to kill King Alfonso XIII of Spain and Princess Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg after their wedding by throwing a bomb into the wedding procession.

**1909** – Simón Radowitzky assassinates the Buenos Aires chief of police.

**1912** – Manuel Pardiñas kills Spanish Prime Minister José Canalejas in Madrid.

**1913** – Alexandros Schinas shoots King George I of Greece dead.



**1920.** Wall Street bombing kills 38 and wounds 143. Galleanist Mario Buda widely believed to be the perpetrator.

**1914** – A bomb being prepared for use at John D. Rockefeller's home in Tarrytown, New York explodes prematurely killing three anarchists.

**1914** – Followers of Luigi Galleani explode two bombs in New York City after police disperse a protest by anarchists at Rockefeller's home.

**1916** – San Francisco Preparedness [for WWI] Day bombing. 10 persons killed; 40 injured. Attributed to anarchists but never proven.

**1917** – Nine policemen in Milwaukee killed when a time bomb left at a Catholic church by Galleanists explodes at a police station.

**1917** – Seattle Mayor Ole Hanson, receives a Galleanist mail bomb (defused).

**1917** – A servant of U.S. Senator Thomas W. Hardwick loses her hands from a Galleanist mail bomb.

**1917** – Galleanist Carlo Valdinoci blows himself up when his bomb explodes prematurely at the Washington DC home of U.S. Attorney General Mitchell Palmer.

**1917** – A New York City night watchman killed by a Galleanist bomb placed at a judge's house.

**1921.** Three anarchists shoot 3-time Spanish premier Eduardo Dato Iradier dead in Madrid.

**1923** – Francisco Ascaso, and Buenaventura Durruti assassinate wealthy Cardinal Juan Soldevilla of Saragossa as a reprisal for the killing of an anarcho-syndicalist unionist.

**1924** – Ascaso and Durruti attempt to assassinate the arch-reactionary King Alfonso XIII of Spain in Paris.

**1924** – Ascaso and Durruti organize unsuccessful attacks on military barracks in Barcelona. They flee to Latin America carrying out bank robberies in Chile and Argentina.

**1926–1928** – Several bombings in Argentina organized by Severino Di Giovanni, supporting Sacco and Vanzetti and against fascist Italy's interests there.

**1932** – A dynamite-filled package bomb left by Galleanists destroys Judge Webster Thayer's home in Worcester, Massachusetts, injuring his wife and a housekeeper. Thayer presided over the trials of Sacco and Vanzetti.

**1933** – Giuseppe Zangara shoots and kills Chicago mayor, Anton Cermack, missing near-by President Roosevelt.

**Note:** There are questions regarding McKinley's and Cermack's assassins as to whether they were actually anarchists. Still, both shootings had a profoundly negative impact on the anarchist movements of the times.





Feeding ourselves! A Detroit community garden.

# Taking it OFF the streets! From Ritual to Resistance

**A new world can't be built in the streets. Making resistance real means creating an alternate social structure.**

BY JEFF SHANTZ

**T**he Occupy mobilizations of the last year have offered to many some hope for a renewal of popular movements and alternatives to state capitalist arrangements. Yet, perhaps few recurring events show the great disparity that exists between activist subcultures and broader working class and poor communities in North America than the privileging of street protests and demonstrations within activist practices.

There is a rote ritualism that gives street demos and public expressions of dissent priority over other strategies and tactics. Yet mass demos that bring together atomized individuals without a real base or infrastructures supporting the mobilizations have minimal real impact.

We need to build lasting infrastructures rather than being sitting ducks in the streets.

It seems highly likely, indeed almost certain,

that the spectacular waves of alternative globalization struggles from the summit protests since Seattle in 1999 to the ongoing Occupy movements launched in 2011, will lose momentum and subside or drift into reformism in the absence of building real connections and moving toward struggles for control in workplaces and neighborhoods.

The realms of workplaces, neighborhoods, and households have largely been ignored or abandoned as sites of transformative struggle by current activist movements. Workplace struggles, where they exist at all, are dominated by bureaucratic mainstream unions focused on bargaining compromises with employers.

Household organizing has been largely overlooked by radical activists—apart from those who retreat into their own (privatized and detached) collective houses. Issues of mental health and wellbeing have been given too little attention in movements focused on economics and politics in a more traditional and limited fashion.

## BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURES OF RESISTANCE

Anarchists recognize (or should) that struggles for a better world beyond state capitalism must occur on two simultaneous levels. They must be capable of defeating states

and capital and must, at the same time, provide infrastructures or foundations of the future society in the present day. Indeed, this latter process will be a fundamental part of the work of defeating states and capital.

Through infrastructures of resistance, movements will build alternatives but, as importantly, have capacities to defend the new social formations. These infrastructures of resistance will directly confront state capitalist power. Thus, they will need to be defended from often savage attack. The key impulse is to shift the terrain of anti-capitalist struggle from a defensive position—reacting to elite policies and practices or merely offering dissent—to an offensive one—contesting ruling structures and offering workable alternatives. Movements need to shift from a position of resistance to one of active transformation.

This would serve to meet practical needs—of shelter, education, health, and wellbeing—while also raising visions for broader alternatives and stoking the capacity to imagine or see new possibilities.

Building infrastructures of resistance will directly affect movements in practical and visionary ways. It will also challenge ruling elites by pushing them into reactive, rather than purely offensive, and confident, positions.

Such infrastructures of resistance would shift ►►



► possibilities for strategizing and mobilization. They might render demonstrations unnecessary by offering a base for refusing or countering institutions and practices of states and capital. At the same time, more than simply opposing authoritarian institutions we might develop our own means for living the lives we desire.

Transformation must focus on controlling means of reproduction as well as means of production. Focus on worker control alone leaves communities unable to allocate resources effectively and efficiently to meet broader needs (social or ecological).

At the same time, community control without control of means of production would be futile, a fantasy.

A new social world cannot be built from scratch. Nor does it need to be.

The mutual aid relationships and already existing associations that people have organized around work and personal interests (clubs, groups, informal workplace networks, even subcultures) can provide possible resources.

At the same time, many infrastructures are needed. Even today, in working class and poor neighborhoods and households, many workers have only loose informal connections in their workplaces. In apartment complexes, households can link up in direct assemblies to organize shared resources. Some might include cooking, maintenance, laundry, health care, education, birthing rooms, and recreational facilities.

Building infrastructures of resistance encourages novel ways of thinking about revolutionary transformation. Rather than the familiar form of street organization or protest action, within constructive anarchist approaches, the action is in the organizing. There needs to be already existing infrastructures or else a radical or revolutionary transformation will be impossible (or disastrous).

On the need for pre-existing revolutionary infrastructures, larger mobilizations such as general strikes cannot have a meaningful impact in the absence of infrastructures of resistance. Under general strike conditions essential goods and services would be absent. Water, energy, food, and medical services would not be available without alternative associations or capacities to occupy and run workplaces to meet human social needs. These sorts of takeover themselves require pre-existing infrastructures.

## UNIONS

One of the infrastructures that requires a

real alternative are labor unions, institutions that have been at the heart of working class (workplace and community) struggles but which have long been conservatizing forces. For most anarchists, unions have lost any emancipatory capacities they might have once held. Indeed, for many anarchists, unions were never geared toward emancipation from capitalism, apart from the examples posed by a few syndicalist unions such as the Industrial Workers of the World in North America or the *Confédération National de Trabajo* (CNT).

Unions manage the labor and wage relationship. They do not oppose it. They represent a bureaucratic structure outside of the workplace rather than a democratic free association of workers within it. In fact, mainstream unions often work to stamp out or disband such associations where they do emerge in workplaces and challenge management and ownership

In some ways the role of radical capacity of unions is a moot point since unionization rates have declined to miniscule proportions in industries in the United States and Canada. There is presently an eight percent unionization rate in non-governmental workplaces in the United States. It is likely that the union movement will not recover, at least in its previously understood and recognized forms. Of course, the point is in no way to rebuild unions, since why would we expect them to perform differently than they have under previous conditions. The point is to build the strength of rank-and-file working class movements within broad struggles.

So, the door is wide open, the floor cleared for new forms of working class workplace association or organization. Yet, there have been only halting, experimental attempts to fill the void. Some have been false starts while others hold some promise. Those that are most promising suggest a coming together of rank and file activists and militants.

There can be no meaningful workplace strike without some workplace organizing. Militant organizing in the workplace requires rank and file alternatives, such as flying squads, working groups, and direct action groups. Some of these alternatives have developed with varying degrees of success.

## CONCLUSION

Anarchist organizers should radically shift the terrain of anti-capitalist struggles, moving to new battlegrounds rather than staying in the streets of protest and the town squares of Occupy movements.

For constructive anarchists there are three primary sites of struggle with which anarchists must be engaged. These are the neighborhoods, workplaces, and households. Successful organizing in these areas should provide means to defeat states and capital, while also making the new world in the present—rather than waiting for a post-capitalist future. This shift must involve offensive as well as defensive strategies.

Movements have too often, for too long, been caught up in defensive or reactive struggles—responding to pieces of harmful legislation or damaging public policy, or opposing specific corporate or government practices. Such pursuits have dominated the vision of movements and activists in the global North. It has led to a staleness of approach that fails to inspire people while leading instead to frustration and demoralization as rote repetitions of rituals are played out in response to external decisions by others rather than asserting internal or organic needs and desires of the people directly involved. Instead, movements need to affirm their own wishes and visions of a better world.

Even more, the rituals of street protest, disconnected from a prior organized community base, do little to actually challenge power or structure of inequality. Typically, they simply serve to reinforce the notion that liberal democracies allow spaces for dissent and divergent views. One might question the amount of energy, resources, and time put into single issue campaigns, street demonstrations, and camps on public lands.

Spectacular ritual events like demonstrations, protests, and public occupations dominate activist imaginations and organizational visions. This demonstration fixation has hindered social movements in liberal democracies for generations.

The present period offers some new and encouraging openings—windows of opportunity for radical perspectives and movements against and beyond states and capital. To take advantage of this moment it is necessary to take a hard look at the ingrained rituals that have come to dominate movements, particularly those holdovers from periods of lesser mobilization.

Jeff Shantz is an anarchist community organizer in Surrey, British Columbia and author of *Active Anarchy* editor of *Protest and Punishment*. He is active with the Critical Criminology Working Group. His web address is [jeffshantz.ca](http://jeffshantz.ca).



# London Calling

## John Zerzan in London, but not for the Olympics

BY JOHN ZERZAN

The first half of August 2012 found my wife Alice and I in London, but not for the Olympic Games. The nonprofit contemporary art gallery Raven Row invited me to participate in a series of talks and displays titled "The Real Truth: A World's Fair."

The talks took place on successive weekends at the gallery on Artillery Lane in the East End just north of Whitechapel. We arrived too late to take in the first one on the history of world fairs, and were back in the States by the time of the fourth presentation, by an ex-CIA operative.

The third speaker, Jim Channon, of Men Who Stare at Goats fame, held forth on August 11 and proved to be a rather classic New Age airhead. All is going well, create your own reality, e.g., even the military can be the biggest possible force for good(!). Some of us blasted him in no uncertain terms and people in the audience weren't buying what he was selling.

My turn was second in the series on August 4. The Raven Row auditorium (about 150 capacity) filled up and some people were turned away at the door. More important was the very high level of discussion after I spoke and the conversations that continued at length.

The title of my talk was "The Murderous Idolatry of the Future: Anarcho-Primitivism and the End of Technology." In it, I discussed the pathologies created by the disappearance of community and its roots with its culmination of mass society in the

techno-sphere and the results such as the rising wave of mass shootings and drug epidemics.

Also, a room was given over to issues of the Fifth Estate from each of the years it has published since the 1960s; forty-seven issues in total. Raven Row requested these from the Detroit archive and following their display are now stored at MayDay Rooms also in London.

MayDay Rooms describes itself as "a safe house for vulnerable archives and historical material linked to social movements, experimental culture, and marginalized figures and groups. A site for gathering, holding, and animating documents and idioms of dissent which continue to offer a critically productive and emancipatory relation to the turbulent present." [maydayrooms.org](http://maydayrooms.org)

Several videos were screened, including the excellent 2003 high tech survey *Das Netz: The Unabomber, LSD and the Internet*. We brought books, posters, and t-shirts that were prominently displayed.

The whole encounter was a marvelous glimpse into the possibilities and range of visions in the arena of art today. "The Real Truth," curated by the very talented Suzanne Treister, was one such example, and Raven Row overall has been a stand-out venue for contemporary explorations. Its director, Alex Sainsbury, is dedicated to providing an important center for pushing limits in general.

We made day trips to the Birmingham area and to Oxford, but spent most of our time walking all over London from our East End

(Spitalfields) base, a lovely flat above Raven Row's gallery spaces.

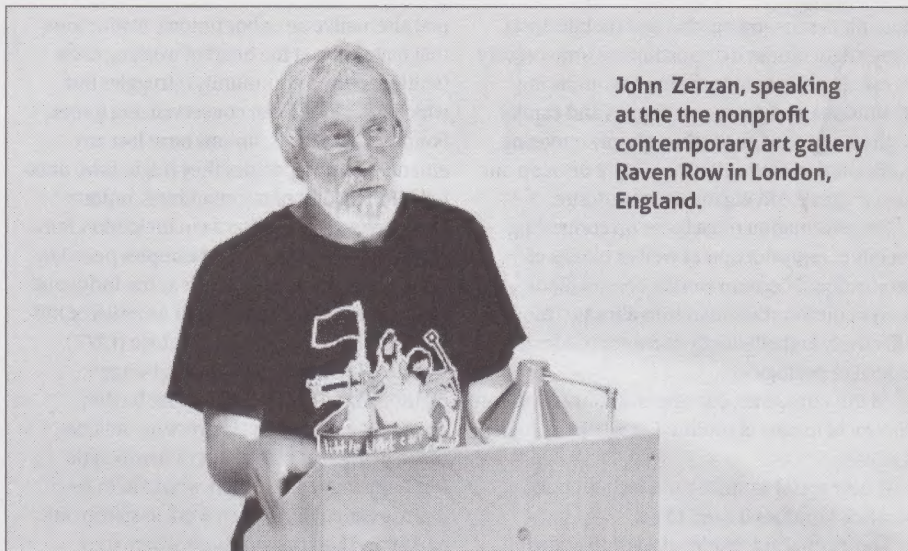
Several anarchists I'm touch with showed up including Keith from Transitions Chichester who'd biked 70 miles from Sussex the morning of my talk, Ed from Wales, Steve from Cumbria's Dark Mountain Project in northwest England, former Green Anarchist editor John Connor from Oxford, and Harsheek, a young Londoner.

There are various anarchist projects afoot, but my impression was that communication among them was fairly minimal. However, given a high level of antipathy toward the dominant order that I was hearing, there are definitely radical possibilities. Anarcho-primitivism is something of a presence and I was gratified to learn there were English listeners to my Anarchy Radio program broadcast from Eugene.

All in all, a wonderful 2-3 weeks made possible by our Raven Row friends.

*The gallery web site is [ravenrow.org](http://ravenrow.org); the Fifth Estates are archived at [maydayrooms.org](http://maydayrooms.org).*

*John Zerzan is an American anarchist and primitivist philosopher and author of several books on the subject. His articles which began the introduction of primitivist and anti-civilization ideas to the anarchist milieu first appeared in the Fifth Estate in the late 1970s. His web site is [johnzerzan.net](http://johnzerzan.net) Zerzan's one hour live radio show, "AnarchyRadio" airs Tuesday, 7:00pm, PST, and is available by audio streaming at KWVA 88.1 FM.*



John Zerzan, speaking at the the nonprofit contemporary art gallery Raven Row in London, England.

Photo by Eva Herzog



# A CHANGING VIETNAM

After decades of war and revolution, a communist country looks increasingly like the capitalist countries it fought against.

BY JONNY BALL

Having lived and worked in Vietnam for a year now, I have only a slightly better understanding of the country than when I first arrived. This is a country of extremely complex paradoxes and antagonisms. I remain dumbfounded by the disparities, hypocrisies and corruption that are endemic at every level of every institution.

One could argue this is a common feature of all nation-states and market-oriented societies, and this may be true. But for one styling itself as socialist, run by a communist party with a firm monopoly of political power, these features seem even more maniacal.

Not long after my arrival in Hanoi, I began thinking that a mood of entropy emanates from the entire city—it is a totally schizophrenic metropolis.

We are told it is the dawning of the Asian Century. The global balance of power is shifting again towards the East. The economic powerhouses of China, India, South Korea, and Taiwan, put recession-hit European and American markets to shame, with GDP growth rates consistently pushing towards double figures for the last decade,

China has capitalized fully on its vast army of cheap labor and the internal migration from the countryside to burgeoning megacities. An authoritarian, one-party state keeps a tight lid on its power, paying lip-service to Marx, Mao and Lenin while simultaneously welcoming economic liberalization, foreign direct investment, and the heady world of globalization. As the developed economies in the West struggle to pay off their international creditors and manage their structural deficits, the Asian Tigers enjoy a boom.

Vietnam's leaders, predictably, also want a piece of the pie.

Almost forty years after the withdrawal of US troops from Saigon, the Communist Party-Vietnam (CPV) continues along the same path it has pursued since the *doi moi* reforms announced in 1986. Comparable in sum and substance to China's Deng Xioping's restructuring towards a "socialist-orientated market economy," Vietnam's *doi moi* policies amount to an abandonment (or, as the government says, a temporary hiatus) of some of Marxism's core tenets.

These include a discarding of the previously unassailable principle of central planning and collectivization in industry and agriculture, and instead embracing what was once anathema—economic liberalization,

modernization, and globalization. Far from being nominal or abstract, the reforms manifest themselves in very visible ways.

The highway between Hanoi's airport and the city centre is edged with gigantic billboards looming over rice paddies, advertising banks, cars, and mobile phones. The country's northern capital has long been at the mercy of its traffic, but its clogged arteries are increasingly filled with imported Bentleys, Porsches, and 4x4s, the vehicles of choice for the nouveau riche despite a tariff of 80 percent on automobiles.

Giant billboards that cover French colonial buildings in the old quarter are adorned with a Big Brother-esque portrait of Steve Jobs with the tagline, "Think Different." Presumably, the country's rulers hope the slogan isn't taken too literally.

In the richer districts, gaudy communist propaganda sits uncomfortably

beside Gucci posters and designer fashion outlets. While the majority pay for public education and healthcare, the propertied classes send their children to private English language schools to ensure their class position and relative wealth is protected for their progeny.

Conspicuous consumption is the order of the day, with a new generation keen to flaunt money and consumer goods of which their grandparents could only dream. All the paradoxes of modern capitalism, the inequities, discords and antagonisms produce a dissonance as unmistakable in this

ostensibly socialist republic as in any capitalist mecca.

The brazen contradiction between official Party doctrine and its actual practice is perhaps best encapsulated in the name of Vietnam's "Ho Chi Minh Stock Exchange." Now, the great leader's near-ubiquitous image has to compete for space with the Apple logo and the Los Angeles Lakers' emblem. And, as Uncle Ho lies in his air-tight glass coffin, with lines of backpackers, tourists, and Vietnamese faithful filing past in neat, reverent succession, how would he interpret the state of his country today?

One suspects he'd be turning in his transparent grave like a rotisserie chicken. The posters announcing the annual Labor Day celebrations come complete with a sponsor—Vietcom Bank. Just outside the city, a private gated community (named Ciputra, after its Indonesian property-mogul owner) complete with luxury apartments and fast-food outlets is populated by expats, businessmen, and high-ranking government officials. Outside



Photos by Alison Trew

Gucci meets Communism, Inc. in Hanoi



# Vietnam

From page 11

a KFC in the city centre, rubbish collectors and fruit sellers struggle to make a living in a country with an equality ranking lower than Niger and Tanzania's.

Flashback to 1976, a year after the withdrawal of US troops from Saigon, and the newly-united country is embarking upon a process of forced collectivization, nationalization, and "re-education-through-labor" for those Vietnamese who fought for the Southern army and their American counterparts.

An exact figure of 58,220 Americans deaths; around 1,000,000-3,000,000 Vietnamese deaths (but those are rarely tabulated). Approximately half a million Cambodian and Laotian deaths, but again, who's counting?. Millions dead by any measure, in a proxy war between competing superpowers. Victims of the great geopolitical game that was the Cold War.

One bloc trying to prevent the feared, "domino effect," the other trying to provoke the dominos' fall. In their rhetoric, each had a seemingly unique orthodox creed, but one that concealed the real principle both blocs held in common—



national pride and America's international embarrassment.

In today's Vietnam, where three-quarters of the population were born after 1975, history is manipulated and used as a tool, a justification for the continued rule of a dictatorial elite, parasites on a memory embedded into the national

state in a region of capitalist states. The socialist experiment failed and now they're open for business.

When it comes to Vietnam's territorial disputes with China (namely over the Spratly islands), America increasingly supports its old enemy as a buttress against Beijing, its main economic competitor.

The liberal journalist, Will Hutton, editor of *The Observer*, comments that, "Although it did not seem so at the time, and is not understood even today in these terms. . . By delaying a communist government in Vietnam, with its Chinese backing, until 1975, the United States had bought a crucial decade for the Asian economy to begin its growth, led by exports, and to show, indisputably, that capitalist development was more successful than communist."

But in wars between political states, the number of losers far outweigh the number of winners. It is the poor who fight the wars of the rich, and it is obscene to try and identify winners or losers in a conflict that left as many as five million dead. Perhaps the most accurate analysis would be that Vietnam saw decades of conflict in which nobody really won.

The victory of the Stalinist CPV didn't equal emancipation for the Vietnamese. Nor would an American victory have been much different.

## In today's Vietnam, history is manipulated and used as a tool

the pursuit and perpetuation of their own power.

Between the American army with their Thai, Australian, and South Vietnamese allies, and the North Vietnamese army, with their Russian and Chinese allies, there is no side to be taken. When faced with two options, always choose the third. A plague on both their houses.

The Vietnam conflict was a protracted civil war exacerbated by foreign military intervention. No doubt without the presence of US troops, Saigon would have quickly been captured by the communists.

Similarly, without the backing of China and the Soviet Union, the communists would have found it difficult to withstand the onslaught of American firepower. It was in this sense a surrogate war, a chess board for nuclear-armed states, for whom a direct conflict meant mutually assured destruction. Vietnam was their go-between.

And, to the victors belong the spoils. The US military suffered humiliating defeat for the first time and at the hands of a peasant army. A superpower ousted by a national liberation movement in full view of the press corps.

Or, so the official narrative goes. Vietnam's

consciousness, a memory altered and framed *a posteriori*, and then proliferated by a ruling class keen on continuing their dominance into posterity. The memory of war legitimizes them and consolidates their power.

Incontestable deference and acclaim for those who fought off imperialist invaders—The Party which fought off French, Japanese, and American occupiers, and who first established Vietnam as an independent nation, must certainly know what's best. But their time will come. An Asian Spring is near.

The Party's grip on power depends on their ability to sustain high growth rates and employment. But as demand for exports dries up, there are signs of stress in an economy nearing the end of a credit and property binge. Once this warped social contract is broken, who knows what form a post-CPV Vietnam will take.

With hindsight, (and forgive the historical revisionism, it is without an ounce of glee or triumphalism) if anyone actually "won," it was the American invaders. The US wanted Vietnam, or at least the South, to remain a capitalist puppet state as a bastion against communism in the region. Today, Vietnam is a capitalist

Political opposition is routinely suppressed, human rights campaigners and bloggers jailed, and reformist organizations such as Viet Tan labeled as "terrorists." Land evictions are violently resisted by the local population as the government tries to auction off sites for new developments, resorts and gated-communities. None of this is reported in the state-controlled media.

Vietnam is a country of such glaring and unsustainable internal contradictions that it cannot remain in stasis. The corruption of its leaders does not go unnoticed by tech-savvy youths who bypass the block on social networks, nor by rural farmers (compromising a majority of the population) who can see first hand that the Party line doesn't hold water. The nonsense of quasi-Marxist spin is laid bare when you're forcibly removed from your home to make way for a golf course.

It shouldn't be long before localized resistance develops into general insurrection.

**Jonny Ball** is an English teacher in Hanoi. He is originally from Liverpool, England.



# Art in Support of Political Prisoners

Marie Mason and Kelly Poe Exhibit:  
"What keeps you sane?"



Kelly Poe's photo of Marie Mason's image of sanity and chair, table, and book.

When you receive a phone call or a letter from Marie Mason, the Green Scare prisoner serving the longest sentence for eco-sabotage, one is almost startled at how buoyant she is, filled with questions about what you're doing and wanting to give her opinion on what is happening in the world.

It's hard to imagine her strength and resolve given her daily circumstances and the future the state intends for her.

Marie is in her third year of a 22-year sentence following her guilty plea to two acts of property damage in which no one was hurt. For this, she is being held in a high security federal facility in Fort Worth, Texas under harsh conditions.

A recent visitor to her at Federal Medical Center Carswell reported, "I just can't fathom what life is like everyday in that facility." Marie's unit is the size of a gymnasium, which initially had individual cells along the walls. However, after a period of construction, the cells have been made into two-person units, squeezing the inmates even more.

There is a small outdoor exercise cage, but even that has a concrete floor and wire on the top, so the prisoners never have an unobstructed view of the sky.

Since being pulled out of a large general population prison in Minnesota in 2010 and transferred to Carswell, she has been outside her building only once when she went for an eye exam. Other than that, she has been in that same building since arrived.

Marie's deep love of the natural world is what impelled her actions both inside and outside the law, and now she hasn't set foot on even a patch of earth in two years.

Carswell describes itself as "a federal prison for female inmates of all security levels with special medical and mental health needs." Marie has

neither of these issues but is kept there for punitive and surveillance reasons.

In spite of all of this, her visitor reports, "She is very strong and very committed."

A major reason Marie remains resolute and doesn't fall into the despair as do so many other Carswell's inmates which are acted out in depression and sometimes violence, is the amount of support she receives from friends, family, comrades, and supporters.

This is manifested by large support actions such as the now annual June 11th Day of Solidarity with Marie and another long-term Green Scare prisoner, Eric McDavid. Actions across the world ranged from small letter writing parties to banner drops, a punk rock karaoke event in New York City, to more militant actions, all expressing support for Eric and Marie and other Green Scare prisoners.

Opposition to the repression and demonizing of Marie and other Green Scare government targets has gained support in a multitude of ways.

A recent one was an installation organized by photographer Kelly Poe at Chicago's The Suburban gallery of her work and Marie's jailhouse paintings which ran from September 23-October 28.

In 2006, Poe began corresponding with several incarcerated environmental activists imprisoned as a result of Operation Backfire, the federal government's program targeting animal and environmental liberation groups, and later, Marie.

She asked each the question: "What are the places that you return to inside your mind's eye; the sacred places that you visualize to help keep you sane? I'll go there and make a picture for you."

Poe traveled across the country to the areas cited by those in prison as far apart as the Oregon coast, South Dakota Badlands, the Arizona desert, and the shore of Lake Michigan to find

and photograph the wild landscapes mentioned by prisoners Rod Coronado, Jake Conroy, Jeffrey Luers, Marie Mason, Daniel McGowan, Jonathan Paul, and Peter Young.

Seven photographs captured by Poe were first shown at Los Angeles' LA><ART gallery in March 2012 to great acclaim.

She also created an accompanying handmade, oversized book, *For the Wild*, printed on rag paper, weighing 30 pounds, containing her years of correspondence, photographs, drawings and letters between the artist and activists. Poe also printed 120 of a smaller version of the book for the Los Angeles and recent exhibits.

For *The Suburban* show, Poe assembled 30 original artworks by Marie mailed from prison to friends, family, and outside supporters painted on the back of letters. Poe had Marie's image, a magnificent sunset with a green flash over Lake Michigan seen from Empire, Michigan, enlarged to wall size in front of the original *For the Wild* book with a table and chair designed by Poe. Marie's paintings were displayed on a rack specially constructed for the exhibit.

The opening reception was well attended and quite lively. It was exactly what Marie would have wanted [undoubtedly, though, not focused on her]; people brought together in solidarity and committed to protecting the earth.

Marie appreciates letters, although she can only write back to a restricted number of people. Write her at: Marie Mason #04672-061, FMC Carswell, P.O. Box 27137, Fort Worth TX 76127.

Info at [supportmariemason.com](http://supportmariemason.com). Funds for her support and legal matters are always needed.



## INQUISITION 2012

## Northwest federal grand jury targets anarchists

Activists jailed for their resistance to the attempt to criminalize a philosophy

BY GOLDIE SILENCE

**A**s of early November, three people were detained in the SeaTac Federal Detention Facility near Seattle because of their refusal to provide a federal grand jury with information about anarchist beliefs and associations.

Federal government prosecutors claim they are investigating violent actions at demonstrations, but the Portland-based Committee Against Political Repression says the extensive surveillance, SWAT raids, and grand jury subpoenas are not simply a response to a few broken windows, but an effort to criminalize the political philosophy of anarchism.

Local activists Matt Duran and Katherine "KteeO" Olejnik are charged with civil contempt for refusing to testify. They, and anyone else subpoenaed by the panel during its term, can be incarcerated until it is dissolved in March 2014, or longer if its term is extended.

This political inquisition went public in July 2012, when several homes in the Pacific Northwest were raided by heavily armed local police SWAT teams, and FBI and Joint Terrorism Task Force agents, using battering rams, flash grenades, and assault rifles. They also exercised search warrants for literature and other items related to anarchist activities, and what government agencies vaguely identify as an "ongoing violent crime investigation."

At the same time, subpoenas were issued for people to testify before a Seattle-based federal grand jury. In September, the jailing of anarchists who refused to cooperate with the nightmarish proceedings began.

All of those subpoenaed so far have bravely declared their resolve to resist the grand jury demands despite the hardships this creates for them, their families, and friends. Leah-Lynn Plante, the third person to resist the grand jury, has vividly discussed the fear and emotional turmoil she experienced from the military-style raid on her home, the exacerbation of previous emotional problems it has caused, and not



Tides of Flame/tidesofflame.wordpress.com

On the streets at the Oakland General Strike, Nov. 2, 2011. One of the actions the Northwest grand jury is investigating. A general strike is a weapon greatly feared by the ruling class.

being able to sleep properly ever since.

Sadly, what the government has been doing in the Northwest is far from an aberration, but an integral part of the normal ongoing state repression of dissenters. Since anarchist activities and ideas are currently receiving so much public attention, and even respect, it is no surprise they are being targeted.

In March 2012, the federal government formed a grand jury in Seattle to investigate political activities. But this only came to public notice in July when homes were invaded. These heavy-handed government moves can be best understood in the context of the past two years of militant protest activities throughout the U.S. In the Pacific Northwest, there have been increasing numbers and intensity of actions in opposition to widespread police brutality and murders, the vicious and degrading

prison system, austerity measures, and decreases in public transit service with fare increases, deteriorating educational opportunities, loss of jobs and affordable housing, gentrification, racist and anti-immigrant policies, the crackdown against the #Occupy movement, and the general humiliations of everyday life.

Police attacks with so-called non-lethal weapons, arrests, prolonged court cases, and imprisonment, along with increasingly draconian laws, have not significantly quelled these diverse ongoing protest actions. This is of great concern to those in power, particularly as people focusing on different social issues and approaches have joined together, albeit tentatively and with ongoing debates and disagreements over methods and goals.

The majority of those subpoenaed to testify have so far been anarchists, but



- ▶ the sweep of this attempt at intimidation also includes those who do not consider themselves anarchists or anti-authoritarians.

Federal grand juries have long been used in the U.S. to collect information about individuals and groups involved in social movements and to intimidate people as part of the government's long history of repressing dissent. These bodies consist of 16 to 23 jurors chosen solely by government prosecutors with no procedure for those called to testify or their attorneys to protest the empanelment of any juror based on that person's bias or any other grounds.

The very existence of such panels and what is being investigated are considered to be secret, and those subpoenaed may not even be told the purpose of the hearings. Moreover, there is no limit on the kinds of

Moreover, sympathy for, if not active involvement in, targeted vandalism has been on the rise. All of this has led to increasingly militant public demonstrations, including the 2012 May Day demonstrations.

Well before May 1, the international working peoples' day, mayors and police chiefs throughout the country were preparing the public to accept justification for government crackdowns by announcing that they were expecting "anarchist violence" and intending to meet it with strict control measures. The federal grand jury formed last March in Seattle is clearly part of the crackdown.

While it is wrong to conclude that growing militancy is the direct cause of the intensifying government repression, it certainly has been used as justification.

## "Federal grand juries have long been used in the U.S. to collect information about individuals and groups involved in social movements and to intimidate people..."

questions people can be asked including very personal matters, information about friends and acquaintances, as well as political activities.

The context is especially intimidating because the proceedings are held behind closed doors, and neither attorneys of those summoned nor the general public are permitted to attend. No one knows in advance whether or not a grand jury will charge any of those subpoenaed or their associates with crimes.

Over the years, many people subpoenaed before grand juries have refused to testify, risking jail for civil contempt, whether or not the grand jury has eventually decided to charge them with a specific crime. Those who refuse to testify can be held as long as 18 months, and extensions of periods of imprisonment are not unheard of.

In 2010 and 2011 there were militant demonstrations against police brutality and for students' rights in the Northwest. Following these, #Occupy and the West Coast port shutdowns involved many people in actions related to social issues for the first time. And, as the various protests have continued, people have been supporting each other in their increasing militancy.

Seattle's liberal/progressive Mayor Mike McGinn strongly reiterated this message immediately before the scheduled May day demonstrations, on April 30. On May 1, McGinn went so far as to declare an emergency situation, claiming anarchists constituted a threat to public safety. As it turned out, what occurred was vandalism against corporate and government property.

Then in July came the raids on homes in Seattle and Olympia, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, along with subpoenas requiring people to testify before the grand jury.

On August 2, only Leah-Lynn Plante appeared at the Federal Courthouse in Seattle. After formally telling the grand jury that she refused to answer their questions, she was temporarily allowed to return home. But, Plante and two others were subpoenaed to appear again in September.

On September 13, the grand jury met again, and this time Plante and Matt Duran appeared, but both refused to testify. Duran was stripped of his right to remain silent by being given immunity from prosecution based on what he might tell the grand jury. He still refused to testify and was charged with civil contempt and held in solitary

confinement for almost a month before being moved into the general prison population.

On September 27 another subpoenaed person, Katherine "KteeO" Olejnik appeared and refused to testify. Since, like Duran, she was stripped of her legal rights by being given immunity, she was also charged with civil contempt and incarcerated.

Plante refused to testify for a third time on October 10, and became the third person to be imprisoned for refusing to cooperate. However, on October 17 she appeared before the grand jury and was quietly released. The conditions of her release have not yet been made public.

On October 25, another person, Matthew "Maddy" Pfeiffer was served with a subpoena to appear before the grand jury on November 7. After receiving the subpoena, Maddy joined the others in declaring the intention to not cooperate.

It is clear that the Seattle grand jury's intent is to gather information on anarchists and others for the purpose of further surveillance and repression, as well as to make cooperation between dissenters difficult by creating fear and distrust among those who have participated in protest activities. The grand jury resisters clearly articulate their intention to resist this.

As Olejnik says, "For me choosing to resist a grand jury is about humanity—I cannot and will not say something that could greatly harm a person's life and providing information that could lead to long term incarceration would be doing that."

Labeling those being targeted as "anarchists," even those with long histories of identifying themselves as other than anarchist, does not simply stem from police and FBI ignorance of differences between various political and social perspectives. It enables the government to send the message that cooperating with anarchists, or even possessing and/or reading anarchist literature, is dangerous.

Nevertheless, the raids and grand jury proceedings have had the opposite effect, resulting in over 400 organizations and thousands of individuals expressing their support for and solidarity with those affected, and many actions in solidarity across the U.S. and the world.

For more information: Committee Against Political Repression at [nopoliticalrepression.wordpress.com](http://nopoliticalrepression.wordpress.com)



# LIFE IN THE BODY DUMP

## How Prisons Warehouse Discarded Women

**A**t 47, Edith Marie Price shows more than a few signs of wear. While her mannerisms generally convey a bouyant and carefree geniality, her face's gauntness betrays the ravages of decades of intravenous drug use, poverty, and the inevitable progression of HIV. Even when she laughs, her dark eyes seem to sparkle with the disarming intensity of all that they have seen.

For Edith, or Edie, as she is known to most of the other residents of the maximum security cell block she currently calls home, 2012 is a very special year. It marks the 30th anniversary of her ride in the revolving doors of Canada's prison system.



**BY KELLY  
PFLUG-BACK**

Since her first conflict with the law at age 17, Edie has been arrested over 100 times and convicted of 52 offences, all of them drug-related. A long-term opiate user, Edie once worked in the sex trade to support her addiction. "I quit working the streets because I'm gay" she explains. "That, and I realized I could sell drugs instead."

"It's not like I'm out to hurt people," she says of her line of work. "A lot of people come to me. If they're hungry, I feed them; if they're sick, I take care of them."

Police target drug dealers who they see as being responsible for the unsightly presence of addiction on the streets, and for the thefts, robberies, and break-ins which people commit because they lack other means to pay for drugs.

Although the activities of drug dealers create major problems in poor communities, they are not the root cause of crime and addiction, according to Edie. In fact, she says, cracking down on trafficking generally escalates levels of street crime as dealers become more aggressive and reckless in order to make the risks worth it for themselves financially, often engaging in violent turf

wars and cutting their product with toxic substances to increase weight, resulting in epidemic deaths within the user population.

Drug abuse, Edie says, usually stems from the emotional and psychological pain of trauma, one of the few commodities which the poor and disenfranchised are allowed to possess in sheer surplus. Like a grotesquely high proportion of women who end up on the streets and in conflict with the law, Edie's life has been shaped by abuse and neglect. From the age of six, Edie was sexually preyed upon by her step-father. The abuse was an open secret in their home, known to all but never acknowledged until Edie became pregnant at 16 and her mother demanded she get an abortion.

While the high percentage of abuse survivors in the female prison population is clear, the institution which houses Edie and a few hundred other women does nothing to address this in the allegedly rehabilitative structure of its policies and regimen. "The guards here," Edie tells me, "have no training for dealing with mental health issues. And, having been raped is a mental health issue. But how do you go up to a guard and say 'Look, I was abused, I was raped'?"

It was abuse which pushed Edie to drop out of school in the eighth grade, confused and alienated by the grim reality of her home life. Unable to bear her father's violence and her mother's denial any longer, she ran away at 17 to live on the streets of Toronto. Her older brother, already a heroin user, was the only person she knew from whom to seek companionship. "My brother was the first one to put a needle in my arm," she tells me, her eyes welling with tears. "And every time I tell him that, he cries."

While Edie's drug use itself has not significantly interfered with her ability to work and lead a relatively stable life, the criminalization of her addiction has. When she moved to Edmonton after earning a forklift operator's license a few years ago, it was not long before local authorities learned of her extensive drug history and began routinely

searching her whenever she was spotted downtown.

These searches were often coupled with violence as a deep scar running down her left shin attests, and it was not uncommon for male officers to illegally strip-search her. Now back in Ontario, the searches of Edie's home and person are no less routine and systematic. A raid at the St. Catherine's house where she lives with her wife of 15 years, resulted in the discovery of two prescription opiate pills, and is the reason for her current incarceration.

If drug use were not treated as a criminal offense, Edie feels that she could have had a very different lot in life. With access to safe injection sites and a greater availability of harm reduction services, she would not have resorted to using the contaminated needle that infected her with HIV. Without the disruption of frequent periods of incarceration she could have pursued her career interests rather than working the sex trade against her wishes.

Like many people who grapple with addiction in a society which regards drug dependance as a crime and a moral defect rather than a complex and layered social issue, Edie's life has been characterized by bitter, "If Only,"—if only she hadn't developed an addiction, she would not have spent the 30 years in and out of jail. If only she'd had love and stability in her childhood instead of violence and isolation she would not have spent her life carrying the pain which pushed her down the road of drug abuse to begin with.

"When you really get down to the bottom of it," Edie explains, "it's because I was raped that I am in this position today. It is because I was raped that the system fucks with me."

It is here that the majority of public criticism relating to the carceral system shows its limitations as gender-biased analysis. Prisons in general may be a way of warehousing the surplus populations whose presence on the streets challenges the fundamental myths of capitalism, but the institutions which imprison women in particular are in many ways a different entity.



► Within a patriarchal society, imprisoning impoverished and marginalized women functions as a sort of return policy, through which broken or defective objects may discretely be disposed of once they have been used to the point where they can no longer serve their allotted purpose. Sex trade workers who rob pimps or attack abusive clients, rape survivors who turn to drugs to escape the pain of post traumatic stress, and underpaid workers who skim off of lecherous bosses may easily be discarded.

The inequalities inherent in patriarchal society will continue to produce a seemingly endless selection of newer, more vulnerable, more easily dominated models for the benefit of the consumer class. And, when they too become drab, worn out, or scarred to the point of complete disfigurement from over-use, they can join their predecessors in one of the prison system's numerous dumpsites for damaged and rejected goods.

While Edie's body remains physically confined, she has in many ways attained a level of freedom which many survivors, incarcerated or otherwise, go their entire lives without realizing.

"I didn't go through this for nothing." She says, her face hardening with a stony conviction. "Do you know how many people I advise in here? I know this system. I know it like the back of my hand."

Edie is a woman who has stared back into the faceless gaze of the overseer, studied the drives and motives of the state's judicial apparatus in painstaking detail. She has come to understand and accept that her life's circumstances are the product of complex systems of power and oppression, rather than the simple outcome of her actions as an individual.

It is this understanding which has allowed her to free herself from the internalized shame and self-hate which torment so many survivors of abuse, both structural and direct, and that is a freedom which no one can take away from her.

**Kelly Pflug-Back**, a Fifth Estate editor, is imprisoned in the same facility as Edie.

**John McMahon, Toronto sentencing judge: Pflug-Back showed "zero remorse." ►**

The two accounts below of the sentencing of Kelly Pflug-Back, illustrate the gulf between alternative and mainstream journalism. The writing in the latter comes from Canada's Toronto-based, right-wing, *The National Post*.

## Kelly Pflug-Back sentenced to 15 months for attacks in Toronto

### FIFTH ESTATE

Fifth Estate writer and editor, Kelly Rose Pflug-Back, was sentenced by a Canadian court July 19 to 15 months in prison for militant actions carried out by a Black Bloc contingent during protests at the 2010 Toronto G20 meeting.

Kelly accepted a non-cooperation plea agreement, pleading guilty to six counts of mischief and one of wearing a disguise with criminal intent. Her sentence was reduced by four months to a total of 11 months in prison because of time served which included house arrest. Following her prison term she will be on probation for three years.

Kelly is a long time community organizer, activist, published writer, poet, artist and musician. A collection of Kelly's poetry, *These Burning Streets*, published by Strangers In A Tangled Wilderness to support her is available from tangledwilderness.org.

Kelly is a long time activist with groups such as Food Not Bombs, Camas Books in Victoria, B.C., harm reduction work in Toronto, and indigenous solidarity work, as

well as hosting workshops and outreach for queer youth.

At the time of her sentencing Kelly was a full time student working towards a degree. She maintains a vegan diet which is very difficult to do in Canadian prisons.

Most mainstream media depicts Kelly as a violent vandal [see article below] who has no remorse for terrorizing "innocent shoppers," as well as calling her cowardly for wearing a mask while taking on heavily armed and armored riot police in the midst of one of the largest surveillance cultures in the world. [See Kelly's article, "G20 Gender Violence: Toronto Targeted Women," in Summer 2012 FE.]

The media has routinely refers to breaking windows by Black Blocs as violent, occasionally declaring it as terrorism. Meanwhile, predictably downplaying police violence and misconduct by ignoring numerous cases of police sexually assaulting or threatening to rape women during the 1,100 arrests, the largest number in Canadian history, made during the G20 demonstrations.

## G20 protester Kelly Pflug-Back gets 15 months in prison

### NATIONAL POST

One of the most destructive Black Bloc vandals convicted in relation to the Toronto G20 summit received a 15-month prison sentence July 19.

Kelly Pflug-Back, a 23-year-old student who attended court in a tight red sweater and black skirt, grinned at dozens of cheering supporters before being led away in handcuffs. Even after she left the room, many remained standing with their fists in the air.

The air of quasi-celebrity surrounding Pflug-Back terrorized local businesses and smashed police cars during a masked rampage through the streets of Toronto two years ago.

Judge John McMahon noted Pflug-Back did more than \$160,000 in damage to police cars and businesses. She also guided other black-clad protesters to target larger businesses, displaying a "callous disregard" for the employees within.



Kelly Pflug-Back captured on video at the 2010 G20 demonstrations in Toronto

Throughout the G20 rampage, Pflug-Back and her fellow rioters "cowardly" covered their faces with masks and effectively damaged the cause of legitimate protesters, Judge McMahon said.

Pflug-Back showed "zero remorse" for the harm she caused, acting disinterested throughout several court appearances.



# OPERATION 8: TERROR DOWN UNDER

New Zealand government repression against Maori people and their supporters

BY VALERIE MORSE

**Ka whawhai tonu matou. Ake! Ake! Ake! – “We will fight forever and ever and ever”**

– **Rewi Maniapoto**, leader of the armed resistance against colonial settlement in New Zealand, at the Battle of Orakau 1864

It is hard to imagine the reach of the United States if you have never lived outside of it. In New Zealand, it is pervasive and simultaneously invisible: ideas, culture, and laws are imported and imposed. Following 9/11, New Zealand (NZ) jumped to ratify its own version of the US Patriot Act.

Here it was called the Terrorism Suppression Act. In 2002 when it was passed, I had no idea that I would become one of the first people against whom this law would be used. In 2007, I found out.

More than 300 police carried out “Operation 8”—dawn raids on dozens of houses all over Aotearoa New Zealand. Police claim the raids were in response to “concrete terrorist threats” from indigenous activists. Along with 16 other people, I was held without bail awaiting the decision of the Solicitor-General whose permission was required for the police to bring a charge of “participation in a terrorist group,” against us.

The people arrested were primarily Maori (the indigenous people); many of whom were actively involved in the struggle for their iwi (tribal) sovereignty. Tame Iti, one of the country’s most well-known Maori political activists, was deemed the ringleader. The remaining arrestees were anarchists, including myself, involved in a range of worker, environmental, anti-war, and animal rights issues.

The primary allegation was that we had all attended paramilitary training camps in order to devise plans and learn the skills to assassinate leading political figures including George W Bush, NZ’s then Prime Minister, Helen Clark of the nominally left-wing Labour Party, and the conservative leader of the opposition John Key (now Prime Minister).

The primary evidence was video surveillance from cameras installed in the bush around the



Photo by Hoolieta

New Zealand solidarity demo in support of Maori and anarchist defendants in Operation 8 trial

areas where the training camps were held. The grainy imagery shows some people wearing balaclavas, some carrying firearms, and some people carrying flaming objects in what the police say was training in throwing Molotov cocktails. All of this was on Tuhoe land, in the bush. Additional evidence included intercepted phone calls, text messages, conversations from bugged vehicles, and a number of firearms found when the raids were carried out.

Despite a massive police propaganda campaign and compliant media, public skepticism emerged almost immediately. Thousands of people took to the streets in major NZ cities and a campaign for our freedom was launched.

A month later, sitting in my prison cell, I listened as the Solicitor-General announced on national radio that he was “unable to authorize the prosecutions under the Terrorism Suppression Act,” against us. I screamed with unimaginable joy. They could not charge us with being terrorists. The following day, we were released on bail still facing charges of illegal possession of weapons including Molotov cocktails.

Unlike the U.S. where the right to bear arms is guaranteed by the Constitution, in NZ, arms

legislation reverses the burden of proof for possession of weapons. In other words, you have to prove you are innocent – or in legal terms that your possession is “lawful, proper and sufficient.” It is a high threshold.

## A racist operation from start to finish

On the day of the raids, police and special forces carried out a paramilitary invasion and blockade of the Tuhoe village of Ruatoki. They stopped, searched and profiled every car and person trying to leave the valley.

Tuhoe are one of the largest *iwi* in New Zealand

**New Zealand, like all white settler colonial states, is fundamentally illegitimate, and is deeply fearful of its indigenous population.**

with some 40,000 claiming Tuhoe ancestry. They have remained in their ancestral lands in Te Urewera in the North Island. They continue to live in their traditional ways, have communal ownership of land, a subsistence lifestyle of hunting, fishing and growing kumara (sweet potato), and speak Maori as their first language.

They never signed the Treaty of Waitangi, the





## FIFTH ESTATE

- ▶ 1840 document that the state claims is the basis of its legitimacy and sovereignty in the land it occupies. As far as Tuhoe are concerned, they never ceded sovereignty to anyone.

The colonial history between Tuhoe and the NZ government is the same as what occurred in other European occupations of native people's homelands: extreme state brutality, land confiscation, cultural annihilation, and later attempts at assimilation. More than a million acres of land was stolen from Tuhoe and turned into national park.

In 1916, the colonial police force invaded Tuhoe territory to arrest a man named Rua Kenana, who was regarded as a prophet by his people. Ostensibly, the police wanted to arrest Rua for violating liquor laws. In reality, he was a threat to the state.

Rua actively urged his people to refuse to fight in World War I for a government and the British Empire that had stolen their land and killed their people. During this raid, Rua's son and another man were murdered by police, and Rua was arrested. He was subsequently tried and sentenced for the minor offence of resisting arrest to a year of hard labour followed by 18 months imprisonment.

This incident and others like it loom large, not just in Tuhoe history, but in the memories of old people still alive. Colonization is not ancient history for Tuhoe; it is a recurrent reality.

Today, Maori sit at the bottom of every social indicator. In particular, New Zealand has the dubious distinction of imprisoning its indigenous population at one of the highest rates in the world, roughly 634 per 100,000 people, compared with a rate of 192 per 100,000 for the majority pakeha (white) population. Despite its self-delusional image of harmonious race relations, the statistics tell a very different story.

Tame Iti, arrested on the day of the recent raids, is a leading proponent of Maori sovereignty. He routinely uses theatrics for political goals. In 2005, he orchestrated a re-enactment of the 1860s scorched earth policies carried out against his people by using burning cars. As a result of his activities, he has been the subject of sustained state surveillance.

For nearly forty years, Tame has held camps in the native forest, sometimes to help young people get out of gangs, sometimes to teach alienated Maori traditional ways, sometimes to help people overcome drug and alcohol dependency, and sometimes to discuss politics and introduce *pakeha* to life in the forest. He seeks to make links between activists throughout the world and the Tuhoe struggle.

### The illegal evidence

Over the past five years, a painful and

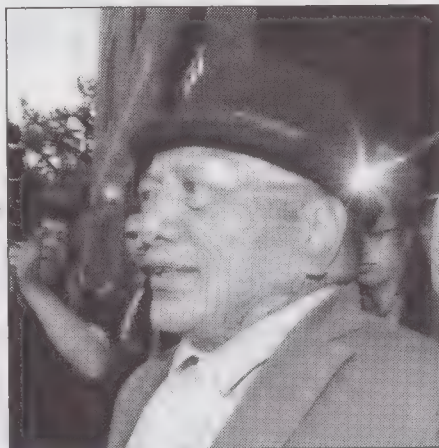


Photo by Gil Hanly

Maori activist Tame Iti outside of High Court after guilty verdict.

expensive legal process has played out through the courts. The state brought an additional charge of participation in an organized criminal group against five of the defendants. These five – Tame, Rangi, Urs, Emily and Tuhoe – were deemed to be the ringleaders.

A crucial point came in September 2011 when the NZ Supreme Court issued a ruling on the admissibility of police evidence. We challenged the legality of police video surveillance cameras placed around Ruatoki including in the local marae (a meeting house similar to a church).

The court surprisingly ruled all of the video evidence had been illegally obtained, but unfortunately, the case didn't end there. In NZ, evidence must be both illegal and unreasonable in order to be excluded. The court said that the evidence could not be used against those of us charged only with the firearms offenses, but it could be used against the five since they faced both firearms charges and the more serious criminal group charge.

By the time of the decision, Tuhoe had died from stress related the case.

In the week that followed, the state dropped all of the charges against the 13 facing only firearms charges. The remaining four would go to trial.

### The trial

Eventually, a jury trial was secured, although the state had sought to deny even that. The trial ran for five weeks. The illegal video was played on the national nightly news for all to consume.

Despite charges being dropped against 13 of us, we were still very much a part of the state's case, and evidence gathered against each of us was used against our comrades on trial. The criminal group charge is one of the worst pieces

of law since it is effectively a guilt by association charge, and no actual criminal offence needs to have happened or even planned.

Nevertheless, despite the state's imaginative narrative of terror and mayhem, the jury didn't quite buy it. They couldn't come to a decision on the criminal group charge; it was a hung jury. However, they did find the defendants guilty on firearms charges, hardly surprising given the high threshold for any person to prove their innocence.

At sentencing, it was clear that the judge bought the state's story. He said a private militia was being established. Despite firearms convictions routinely receiving a fine, Tame and Rangi were sentenced to two and a half years in prison. Urs and Emily, deemed by the judge to be followers rather than leaders, were sentenced to nine months home detention.

### It never ends

Court battles are defensive by nature, and while we are tied up trying to stay out of jail we are not engaged in the struggles on the streets, in the forests, or in the factories that matter to us. That was one aim of Operation 8: repression of dissent—remove lots of troublesome people for a long time, use fear as a tactic to deter others, and disrupt people's lives by making it costly to defend against charges which ultimately were contrived.

The other aim of Operation 8 was the reinforcement of institutional white supremacy by violence. The anti-terror raids were aimed at the entire Maori community. Many saw them simply as a continuation of a legacy of state brutality and the repression of aspirations for *tino rangatiratanga*—sovereignty.

New Zealand, like all white settler colonial states is fundamentally illegitimate, and is deeply fearful of its indigenous population. The state is founded on racist theft and violence. The indigenous peoples of the world are the greatest threat to the illusion of legitimacy for nation-states.

Operation 8 was an exercise in reminding NZ indigenous people who is in control, consigning the Maori worldview to irrelevancy, and repeating a history from which we seem forever unable to learn or escape.

**Valerie Morse** is a Wellington, New Zealand-based anarchist and anti-war activist. She grew up in Tucson, Arizona and misses the beautiful Sonoran desert everyday. She loves kitty cats, gardening, political hip hop, and social revolution.



# Three from Cleveland 4 Sentenced

## Government provocateur invented crime claims more victims.

JENNY FROM SACRAMENTO  
PRISONER SUPPORT

Three entrapped anarchists, part of the Cleveland 4, were sentenced November 21 to harsh but lighter prison terms than what the federal prosecutors requested for an alleged conspiracy to blow up a highway bridge near Cleveland on May Day.

Three of the Cleveland 4, Douglas Wright, Connor Stevens, and Brandon Baxter, received 11 years, eight years, and almost ten years respectively on federal terrorism charges, followed by lifetime probation. The fourth, Joshua Stafford, as of this writing, is in a federal facility undergoing competency testing.

By contrast, a week earlier, a Texas Tech University Saudi student was sentenced to life in federal prison for a bomb plot that included former President George W. Bush's Dallas home.

The group was arrested May 1 by a swarm of federal agents. They were immediately identified as anarchists by the government and demonized by the media.

Anthony Hayne, arrested along with the 4, began cooperating with the government soon after his arrest, hoping for a less severe sentence than what the others faced. Ironically, his plea deal included a 15 to 19 year sentence. As of this writing, he has withdrawn his guilty plea.

Hayne's cooperation is sad for many reasons, but perhaps most distinctly, 1) for its effect on his codefendants who had already felt the sting of betrayal once in this ordeal, and who definitely took his cooperation into consideration when deciding to plead guilty and, 2) because none of them, Hayne included, should have been arrested in the first place.

The Cleveland 4 were entrapped.

The federal affidavit in the case states that a 38-year-old informant, Shaquille Azir, was directed by the FBI to attend an event "held by a protest group" (the "protest group" was Occupy Cleveland and the event was an act of civil disobedience).

Azir was sent there in large part because of the reported presence of anarchists. It was at this event in October 2011 that he met and formed a "friendship" with Douglas Wright. Less than a year later, Douglas and four others were fighting trumped up charges.

The informant had to work hard to bring this case to the government. Azir provided one of the



The Cleveland 4 are four Occupy Cleveland activists, Brandon, Connor, Doug and Joshua "Skelly."

defendants with Adderall (kickstarting a recently overcome addiction), he gave all of them alcohol (two of them were underage), shared his vehicle, and brought them a computer.

Some of the defendants did not have a home or a stable income. The informant provided shelter and employment to at least three of the five. Azir supplied the explosives and the know-how while applying various kinds of pressure on them. The young men faced incredibly manipulative inducements from an informant – an informant who was paid and directed by the government. It appears as though the sentencing judge took this into account with his relatively lenient sentence.

Tragically, the Cleveland 4 case represents an alarming trend in post-9/11 policing. In recent years, the number of cases involving "pre-emptive prosecutions" has dramatically increased. In almost all of these cases the same story line unfolds.

A government informant is sent into a community the government identifies as a target. Often this includes environmentalists, animal rights activists, anarchists, and, most often since 9/11, Muslims.

The informant befriends people within the community. These are often people they perceive to be weak or who can be easily manipulated. Very rarely, if ever, are these the core organizers. Then, with the help of the government, often including the people who will end up prosecuting the case – the informant quite literally creates ■ crime and

entraps their new "friends" in it. The informant will never be prosecuted for the crime they created. They are often working for the government in an effort to work off old charges, or for leniency in another case, such as Azir who has several outstanding charges.

The case of Eric McDavid in 2006 was a striking example of this kind of pre-emptive prosecution (See supporter.org). A young informant was paid over \$65,000 to create a crime and entrap Eric in it. No action was ever carried out, but in 2008 Eric was sentenced to almost 20 years for what amounts to thought crime. In May, people were arrested in Chicago during NATO protests and charged with serious felonies. Those arrested were targeted for their political views and associations.

The government is manufacturing crime to instill fear in the population at large, which they hope will justify the demonization of entire movements of people.

We need to stand strong — together — in the face of repression. We need to ensure that when the state targets and attacks our friends and comrades, we're with them every step of the way. Visit: [cleveland4solidarity.org](http://cleveland4solidarity.org) for more info.

Jenny works with Sacramento Prisoner Support and June 11th. They have just issued *Government Repression, Prisoner Support*, 157pp., available from J&L Printing, Denver Colo.; \$10, order through [pandlprinting.com](http://pandlprinting.com). FE review next issue.



## BY MILES POCHEZ'

A July 13 New York Times article, "That's No Phone. That's My Tracker," by Peter Maass, suggests that we should consider smartphones, computers, and other connected devices as tracking machines rather than appliances of personal convenience.

The manufacturers of these now ubiquitous gadgets claim that aggregating data about individuals favors the consumer, so when you visit a web page, it might display ads relevant to your tastes and needs. But it's widely speculated that far more sinister use is made of this information—that the government enjoys a cozy relationship with the private data gatherers, that information can and will be used against us, and/or to the advantage of the military-industrial complex.

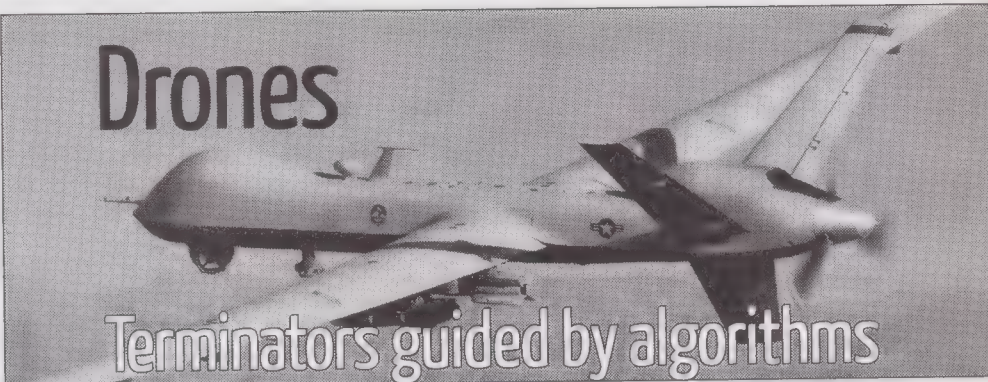
I assume that Amazon and the NSA know a truckload of tangential information about me; that is, who I befriend and communicate with, the web pages I visit, where I am and where I've been, the stores at which I spend money and the items purchased therein. But they're still missing the most important component; that is, who am I, what do I intend to do? If I purchase fertilizer, am I making a bomb or helping my crops? If I purchase boots with deep heels and correspond with persons with Arabic names, am I a terrorist?

Let's say my eldest granddaughter, April Rose, joins the Peace Corps. April is already an accomplished farmer, so she travels to Africa, proselytizing for sustainable agriculture. While there, April befriends local persons her same approximate age; many are illiterate, and relatively unsophisticated in Western terms.

Some are reluctant rebels who, as women, can face recrimination by death, rape, stoning, starvation. They live in a pressure cooker of male dominance, and without future. During informal conversations, April argues against violence or suicide so she should be judged as a worthy asset by the US government; a loyal American ambassador attempting to win hearts and minds, spreading the gospel of peace.

However, a government, any government, decides that April might be a threat, not because they really know anything about her moral compass, but because her spreadsheet calculates a suspicious result. In an over-simplified attempt to decide whether she's enemy or friend, the government decides to intercept her conversations as best they can.

Problem is, April is technically savvy and suspects her friends are being scrutinized by evil forces everywhere. In all communication she uses various encrypted (read: privacy protected) mechanisms so strong that even the



NSA probably can't decipher all the content. Contemporary computer science suggests they know her physical circumstance (accurately) and might be deciphering trigger words plucked from various data streams (inaccurately/partially), including encrypted voice (Skype). We really can't grasp the extent of NSA capability, but when the mechanisms of encryption are cracked, we'll be the last to know.

In this equation, consider the deployment of weaponized drones in all shapes, sizes and capability which will soon outstrip the presumed benefit of human intervention. When a young drone pilot is incapacitated because of a hangover, or a quota is missed, or the master target map spikes beyond capacity, Gen X flips a switch and allows the robots to think for themselves, or even as an interconnected hive. It's incorrect to assume that algorithm will spare life because of a compassionate sub-routine (read Kill Decision by Daniel Suarez, wherein sinister, deployable math, is modeled on the activity of aggressive insects).

April's life ledger might not meet any reasonable standard of proof, but the surreptitiously obtained and commercially available information is fed to a target probability list when sufficiently elevated by algorithm. Let's add it up. She lives in an African nation where dangerous persons are known to exist, she even shares meals with them. She arranges the purchase of fertilizer and, most importantly, she continues frequent conversations with her multinational friends after leaving Africa. April's life and death spreadsheet; simplified, incomplete, misleading.

Although April aims to convert her new social group to peaceful purposes, the aggregated content of her life is, at best, 50 per cent decipherable (looks for keywords, like bomb, or jihad, analyzes compression algorithms for probable content, etc.). After leaving Africa, April

continues to contact them from all over the globe. April's life and death spreadsheet; simplified, incomplete, and misleading; beta.

If in the US, she might be tracked, harassed, or arrested. If still in Africa, she and her friends are vaporized by an invisible, silent drone launched from thousands of miles away designed to remove her by automated, tangential analysis.

Think this is fanciful or improbable? Ask a member of a wedding party in Afghanistan or Yemen that was just blown to bits by a drone operator in Colorado Springs right before she left duty in time for Happy Hour at the local saloon. And, what happens when Iran, Russia, China, Syria, gangs, thugs, mafia, and/or other outliers deploy similar, competing technology?

Don't blink, it's happening already, right under our noses.

We live in a world ruled by government and a gaggle of omnipotent corporations making fundamental, serious judgments about our fellow humans by inadequate proxy. They have the capability to gather enough information about us to sell products or kill ten thousand miles away, but we have no direct knowledge. We are in their crosshairs. Nonetheless, when the numbers dictate, they jail us, take our money, make our lives miserable, foreclose our homes, or, if they think the numbers dictate, extreme action, and a life is gone here or anywhere in the world.

Whose granddaughter, nation, political movement will be next? The enemy algorithm doesn't wait on sufficiently robust technology, rather it turns bits to bombs when the software is deemed good enough. Popular opinion and an endless stream of apocalyptic news forces/allows aggression without proof. Governments and their corporate overlords jail/kill with circumstantial evidence, incredibly flawed human observation, and no moral mandate.

Death by spreadsheet.



# THE SEA

BY JOHN ZERZAN

Last remaining lair of unparalleled wildness. Too big to fail?

The whole world is being objectified, but Melville reminds us of all that remains. "There you stand, lost in the infinite series of the sea." What could be more tangible, more of a contrast with being lost in the digital world, where we feel we can never properly come to grips with anything?

Oceans are about time more than space, "as if there were a correlation between going deep and going back," he writes. The Deep is solemn; linking, in some way, all that has come before. Last things and first things. "Heaven," by comparison, is thin and faintly unserious.

"Over All the Face of Earth Main Ocean Flowed," announced the poem by John Milton. Given its 71 percent predominance on this planet, why is our world called Earth instead of Sea? Much of the land, in fact, could be defined as littoral areas where land and sea meet. The sea is a textured place, infinite in its moods, forms, energies—and not so easily de-textured.

But we see what happens when culture is privileged over place. The sea, where all life began just this side of four billion years ago, must still sustain us. Not only are its waters the original source of life, it also shapes the climate, weather, and temperature of the planet, and therefore the status of terrestrial species.

Kant saw truth as akin to an island surrounded by a stormy sea; water might "run wildly" and drown reason. Chaos, disorder were always to be feared and brought under control. In Milton's paradise, the ocean is chafing under restraint, suggesting that it can yield truth when freed.

The power of nature is to be respected, not domesticated.

We come to life in water, in the amniotic fluid. Blood—and tears—are salty like the sea, menstrual cycles like the tides of the maternal sea, our mother. The sea is mountains rolling, sometimes calm and tempered.

For Swinburne, "the storm sounds only/More notes of more delight. . . ." So many qualities; even phosphorescent at times, as I have seen on the Sea of Cortez. The seascape shows a magnificent array of fluctuating aspects and energies.

John Ruskin found therein "to all human minds the best emblem of unwearied unconquerable power, the wild, various, fantastic, tameless unity of the sea."

If the earth is alive, the oceans are its most living parts. The sea whispers, croons, bellows in its unnumbered moods, always the "ground note of the planet's undersong," as California poet George Sterling put it.

The very pulse of the sea, not only its perpetual motion, has us imagining that it is drawing breath. Inspirations and exhalations of a living, if unimaginably vast animal; many have written of the sea as a fellow creature. English poet and novelist Malcolm Lowry recorded this meditation: "Each drop into the sea is like a life, I thought, each producing a circle in the ocean, or the medium of life itself, and widening into infinity."

In the deep, there is beauty and music, the sweeping surge of it is a matchless strength, a tireless spirit of freedom. Writing in his journal in 1952, Thomas Merton noted that every wave of the sea is free. We might seek a heart like the sea: ever open and at liberty.

American anthropologist and philosopher Loren Eiseley decided that "if there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water." Why does running water, even a fountain or an aquarium, soothe or even heal? Far more potent, incomparable, is the spell of the ocean.

"I was born in the breezes, and I had studied the sea as perhaps few men have studied it, neglecting all else," Joshua Slocum revealed in his late 19th century account, *Sailing Alone Around the World*. For many, the sea demands a deep loyalty, prompted by sheer wonder and the promise of peak experiences.

A sense of being fully animal and fully alive. Ocean-hearted? The sea's staggering presence, its pure openness, brings on very powerful sensations. Rimbaud perhaps went furthest in trying to capture it in words:

I have recovered it.

What? Eternity.

It is the sea

Matched with the sun.

As the young James Joyce evoked the sea: "The clouds were drifting above him silently and silently the seatangle was drifting below him: and the grey warm air was still: and a wild new life was singing in his veins. . . . On and on and on he strode, far out over the sands, singing wildly to the sea, crying to greet the advent of the life that had cried to him."

The sea, our deepest origin, calls to us. Sea-born, we are drawn seaward. Alain Corbin, discussing the work of Adolphe de Custine, recounts the latter's orientation toward that which "instinctively relates to our origins. . . ." Namely, that the "sight of the open sea. . . contributes to the discovery of the deep inner self."

There is an exalting and revelatory experience possible in such a confrontation with the elements. We are humbled at the shore, on the waves, our presence a question. "The completeness and certainty of nature makes life bearable, less anguished," as American anthropologist Richard Nelson has written.

When I was a small child at mid-century, our family sometimes drove west about sixty miles to visit my Dad's brother Ed on the central Oregon coast. My brother and I competed to be the first to see the ocean and cry "I see it!" It was a thrill to catch that first glimpse, every time. About thirty years later, I came back to Oregon from California and worked in Newport at a shrimp cannery, near places called Boiler Bay and Devil's Punchbowl.

I don't think it's surprising that one can feel giddy at the massive sight. The Pacific encompasses fully one-third of the globe, 64 million square miles. Twice the size of the Atlantic. The absolute, (anti-)monumental There of it.

Is it not true that we are all somehow called to the sea by its lure, persuasion, gravity? Until he was forty, John Ruskin was drawn to have "merely stared all day long at the tumbling and creaming strength of the sea." A century later, Robert Frost wrote: "The people along the sand/All turn and look one way./They turn their back on the land. They look at the sea all day." Where every wave is different, and the heart and soul expand.

Loren Eiseley felt the Gulf of Mexico pulling him southward as he lazed in Nebraska's Platte River. And more than that: "I was water. . . ." In 1826, Heinrich Heine had expressed a similar union: "I love the sea as my soul. Often, it even seems to me that the sea really is my soul." Swimming in the ocean involves an "intimate immensity," to borrow a term from French philosopher Gaston Bachelard. It connects with vastness and is inward, yet also a vigorous and robust experience. There can be challenges and perils, ►►



► of course.

Robert Louis Stevenson described a Hawai'ian woman who swam for nine hours "in a high sea," carrying the body of her husband home. Albert Camus confided, "I have always felt I lived on the high seas, threatened, at the heart of a royal happiness."

According to a 2006 *American Historical Review* article, the maritime dimension has become a subject in its own right. "No longer outside time, the sea is being given a history, even as the history of the world is being retold from the perspective of the sea," it says. Unfortunately, its arrival on the stage has occurred on the heels and in the context of another inauguration, heralded by German essayist Gottfried Benn: "Now the series of great insoluble disasters itself is beginning."

The fate of the once freshening sea is now that of crashing fish numbers, accelerated loss of marine and coastal habitats on a global scale, garbage gyres hundreds of miles across, dying coral reefs, growing dead zones (e.g., hypoxic zones in the northern Gulf of Mexico), to cite a few disastrous developments long in the making.

Water is "the most mythological of the elements," wrote historian Charles Kerenyi, and the literature of the sea arguably began with Homer in the early Iron Age, 8th century B.P. He wrote of its lonely austerity, "the sterile sea," a perspective that is certainly already that of civilization, poised against the natural world.

The sea was by now merely a means, a passageway to increased domination, new conquests; large war fleets were well-established. Aphrodite, goddess of love, arose from sea foam, but somehow failed to carry the day.

Seafaring is far older than history; it predates domestication/civilization by hundreds of thousands of years. Humans were navigating the oceans vastly earlier than we were riding horses, for instance. Homo erectus, about 800,000 years ago, crossed scores of miles of ocean to inhabit the island of Flores in the Indonesian archipelago.

And even today, long voyages on the open sea are made by people with no use for metals. The explorer David Lewis marveled at a Pacific native who found his way "by means of a slight swell that probably had its origins thousands of miles away. . . . He had made a perfect landfall in the half-mile gap [between two islands], having navigated for between 45 and 48 miles without a single glimpse of the sky."

Thor Heyerdahl of late 1940s Kon-Tiki expedition fame made use of the "Incas' simple and ingenious way of steering a raft" on his impressive South Pacific odyssey. Interestingly,

while the Incas revered the sea, the Mayas made scant mention of it--possibly because the Mayas had a written language and the Incas did not.

Joshua Slocum's account of his solo sail around the globe notes how the South Pacific islanders "take what nature has provided for

**The quiet gracefulness of sailing ships, and the seamanship skills of their crews, were ushered out in the 19th century in favor of graceless vessels, noisy and forced, like moving factories.**

them," and "have great reason to love their country and fear the white man's yoke, for once harnessed to the plow their life would no longer be a poem." And, his further South Pacific observation: "As I sailed further from the center of civilization I heard less and less of what would and what would not pay."

Meanwhile, cannon-armed sailing ships had "heralded a fundamental advance in Europe's place in the world" in terms of control of oceanic trade routes. In the late 1400s, Portugal and Spain, the first global naval powers, competed for vast stretches of the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific oceans. The world-wide commons of the seas was rather rapidly disenchanted and instrumentalized as the era of modern history dawned. Its relative solitude, silence, spiritual wealth and intimacy gave way to the onslaught of globalization, and then industrial globalization.

The quiet gracefulness of sailing ships, and the seamanship skills of their crews, were ushered out in the 19th century in favor of graceless vessels, noisy and forced, like moving factories. How much globalized industrial existence is possible under simple sail?

Voyages with time enough to know oceans and heavens, taking what wind and wave have to offer. Adventures, not timetables and technological disasters.

A sentiment opposed to the Machine was the sea as archetype and key source of the sublime in the Romantic era. The powerful sea paintings of Winslow Homer and J.M.W. Turner certainly come to mind. But celebrated or not, the oceans were being targeted for domestication. In Childe Harold, Byron wrote: "Man marks the earth with ruin—his control/Stops with the shore."

Later in the century his words no longer rang true. Joseph Conrad dated the end of the old sea from 1869, when the Suez Canal was completed. In 1912, an iceberg quickly dispatched the largest moving object on the planet. Titanic's demise was a blow to confidence in the complete

mastery of nature, as well as the opening act of chronic contemporary disasters.

Peter Matthiessen's novel, *Far Tortuga*, is a troubled meditation on the sea, with its background of a Caribbean region stripped of sea turtles, fish, timber, etc. by the 1970s. In fact, John

Steinbeck described Japanese fishing dredges at work off the coast of Mexico in 1941, "literally scraping the bottom clean" with a ravaging, wasteful industrial process.

The assault on the sea and its inhabitants is nothing new, but is always being intensified by advancing technology. An IBM SmartCloud ad of 2012 boasts of "smarter" computing systems that enable fishermen "to auction their catch while still at sea," to speed up the decimation of the oceans.

Long ago we had few things, on the water especially. Now, we take our profusion of possessions with us. Mass society comes along on the voyage of industrial tourism. "Voyage" comes from via: away. But there is no more away. It is no coincidence that the survival struggles of indigenous peoples and aquatic life have reached a generally similar level of extremity.

"All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full," But Ecclesiastes 1:7 is no longer accurate. Rising sea levels, perceptible since 1930, are an alarming fact. "Other sea-cities have faltered,/ and striven with the tide,/ other sea-cities have struggled/ and died," observed the American poet H.D. Trillions of tons of water are now a steady flow of polar ice cap melting.

Many studies and new books recount what is starkly clear. Rising temperatures, acidification levels and pollution; the North Sea has warmed to the point where tropical fish and birds live in the fjords of Norway. The thermohaline circulation (vertical current movement) in the North Atlantic is weakening markedly.

Damaged, clearly, but not domesticated yet. A couple of lines from two anonymous poets: indicating the ocean, "Give me fields that no man plows/ The farm that pays no fee," and "The ocean's fields are fair and free,/ There are no rent days on the sea!"

To watch a fine surf for hours, to recall direct





## The Sea

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sensory experience—and ponder its severe diminution. Many have called the sea the finest university of life, free from the never-satisfied network of speech and the symbolic. Paul Valéry felt that “the quickening sea/ Gives back my soul. . . O salty potency! / I’ll run to the wave and from it be reborn!”

There is a kind of purification motif that many writers have touched on vis-à-vis the sea. Rimbaud, for example, referred to the sea “which I loved as though it should cleanse me of a stain.” Jack Kerouac’s first novel mentions “the way this Protean ocean extended its cleansing forces up, down, and in a cyclorama to all directions.”

The once-scrubbed seas, soaking up the crime of civilization. John Steinbeck saw that “a breakwater is usually a dirty place, as though tampering with the shoreline is obscene and impractical to the cleansing action of the sea.” For Heyerdahl, the Pacific “had washed and cleansed both body and soul,” echoing Euripedes’ words: “The sea washes away and cleanses every human stain.”

Its own denizens show us so very much. The porpoises that always prefer sailboats; the singing humpback whales; dolphins, with their extraordinary brain size and intelligence. Did not whales and dolphins return to the oceans, having found land life unsatisfactory? There is some kind of open

telepathic connection among all dolphins in the sea, according to New Zealand environmentalist Wade Doak.

“I will go back to the great sweet mother, / Mother and love of men, the sea,” wrote Swinburne. The sea has many voices. “Deep calleth unto deep,” to quote Psalms 52:7. All of life is connected, and the “oceanic feeling” aptly expresses a sense of deep bonds, a oneness.

Not accidentally is “oceanic” the term employed to denote a profound connectedness. Robinson Jeffers told us that “mere use,” meaning the technological, the fabricated world, “won’t cover up the glory.” The glory of the sea, the glory of the non-fabricated world. He celebrated the wholeness of life and the universe, counseling “Love that, not man/ Apart from that.” Also remember, from the French May days of 1968, “Sous les pavés, la plage.” (“Under the cobblestones, the beach.”) to mark their desire.

On his Inca-inspired raft, Thor Heyerdahl discovered a deep truth. “Whether it was 1947 B.C. or A.D. suddenly became of no significance. We lived, and that we felt with alert intensity. We realized that life had been full for men before the technical age also—indeed, fuller and richer in many ways than the life of modern man.”

And, we still have the sea, just possibly too big to fail. “Cease not your moaning you fierce old mother,” wrote Walt Whitman, whose truest poetry so often evoked the sea.

Let’s join with Byron: “Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!”



### Call Submissions: Fifth Estate #389 Spring 2013

Deadline: March 1 Publication date: April 1

Issue Theme: Sex

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## SCHOOLS

# Kicking the Animal Out of You

**F**ifth Estate staffer, playwright, and madcap prankster, the late Pat Halley, once wrote in these pages, "The purpose of education is to kick the animal out of you."

That is, to make individuals conform to a society based on constraint of one's desires and autonomy.

This is true to one degree or another of every culture although within the modern state and capitalist social order, this is carried out to the extreme by the necessities of their definitions.

Every society seeks to reproduce itself by inculcating into its next generation its fundamental values and version of reality.

In one such as ours, where everything that it means to be human has been grotesquely twisted to the needs of the ruling order, formal education teaches unquestioning respect for authority, acceptance of hierarchies, carrying out tasks that benefit others but harm yourself and the planet, adherence to work in which you have no interest, measurement in abstractions, militarism and nationalism, an inherent value in the production and consumption of commodities, religious mysticism, and, perhaps the most insidious, that the current system is the only possible manner in which the world can be constructed.

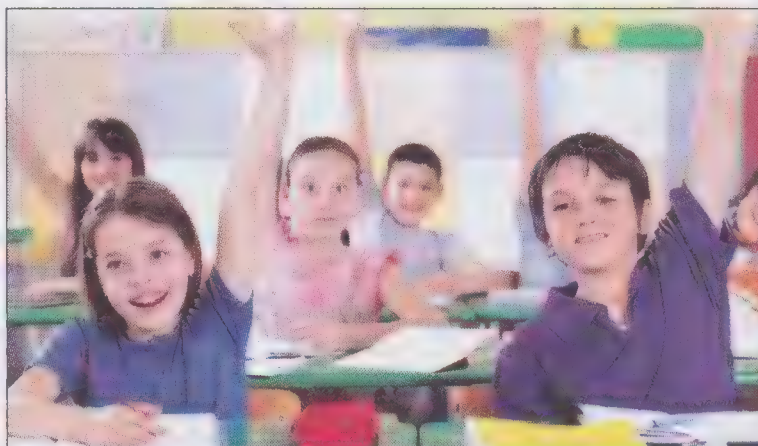
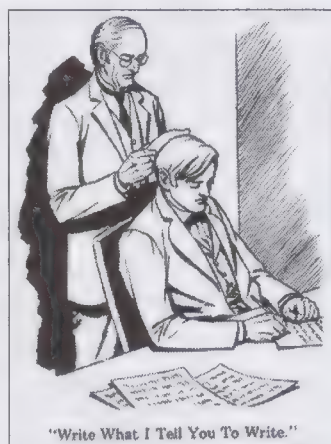
This is what is taught in the best of schools. However, capitalism's trajectory increasingly has less need for a mass educated, compliant workforce as it did when public education was initiated in the 19th century.

Jobs disappear never to return, so schools in the classes beneath the middle become warehouses for the poor and near-poor designed to keep students off the streets, out of the shrinking workforce, and hopefully mold them into a passive population which won't object to their fate.

At the same time, we recognize and salute the many radical public school teachers who subvert their assigned mission by teaching a questioning of authority and received knowledge.

The essays in this section look at the nature of schools and what alternatives are available to those who won't accept these definitions for their children or communities. This is only an opening to the conversation about radical perspectives on education.

We welcome your comments on our Letters page.



## What do we learn in school that couldn't be learned elsewhere?

**W**hy do we send our kids to school? We've been told that it is in elementary school that the bases of learning to read, write, and do math are acquired, although anyone who spends any time with children can clearly see that children want to learn what we do. They want to learn to read if they see us reading, to write if they see us writing, and to count if they see us counting.

What do they want our kids to learn? As observed by Jan D. Matthews observed in *Towards the Destruction of Schooling*, the modern school is a social institution that was created in the context of the development of industrial capitalist society. Today, we can easily see that the objective behind the current reforms is to make school mesh with the values of advanced capitalism: management by projects, competencies, higher education, flexibility, etc.

It aims to prepare a work force that is easily manipulated and can adapt to the needs of the economy. The education system does not aspire to form free and autonomous individuals. Society is the antithesis of a community that is autonomous and self-sufficient.

So, how do children learn? Every day, they watch the activities of the adults around them and watch how relationships between people function. Children raised in a capitalist society learn to accept its social norms, even

if they are in contact with a different discourse.

Children learn in different ways, each one having their own learning style. They learn by listening to us, observing us, imitating and experimenting. Children learn every day, all the time. Even if you don't realize it, your children are studying you at this very moment. They may be more verbal, or more visual, or both equally, self-learning or needing help, and they learn the subjects that are interesting to them, and at their own rhythm.

So then, why do we bring our children to school? School is often seen as an establishment that acquires students so that the teachers can give them their lessons collectively. But if they don't go to school, they'll be ignorant and maladapted, we hear from the mouths of some.

According to several parents practicing home schooling or "unschooling," the educational material of one week of primary or secondary school can be reduced to about 8 to 10 hours a week. The rest of the time, we are taught to be submissive and to fear the authority of the teacher, of the director, of the social worker, of youth protection services, of the police detention centers and of juvenile court.



# Education

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## At school, discipline is at the center of the educational project

Hierarchical society is primarily based on the domestication of human beings. According to radical environmentalist Derrick Jensen, obligatory schooling lasts longer and longer because "it takes that long to sufficiently break the will of the child. It's not easy to disconnect children from their desires, to disconnect them from their own experiences of the world in order to prepare them for miserable and painful work conditions that they will be forced to endure."

The dominant approach to schooling has always been pedagogical formalism, that is, an approach that emphasizes strict discipline and learning by memorization, even if the latest reforms quietly try to take a distance from this.

According to a Foucault-inspired analysis, mandatory schooling under the control of the state represents a network of surveillance and coercion methods in order to standardize the particular ways of learning and acting.

By accepting their social role as agents of the state, teachers employ these practices highlight the notion that the adults own the child, that they have legitimate control over children. Children are made to understand that an authority which is imposed on them must be respected.

Teachers know very well that in the school yard, children will reproduce and give legitimacy to the power relationships experienced in class for their own interests. The children are thus a population to control, to surveil, to evaluate, and discipline; school allows for this. Discipline is not just unique to school; it is also found in the factory, the office, the prison, and the psych ward.

## School as a social institution

School is a social institution that intervenes directly in the process of the socialization of children. Socialization is defined as a process during which an individual learns and interiorizes the norms and the values of the society to which they belong in order to adopt specific social behaviors. This process is necessary for the reproduction of the social order.

A hierarchical society needs school to teach children to be submissive and to renounce their desires, so that children adopt behaviors that support the established order. School socialization is primary and principal socialization, since it

begins at a young age and becomes the main influence on the child, supplanting the family.

Institutionalized socialization is above all a result of the constraints imposed by its agents. Interactions between an individual and their social environment are possible, but they remain under the surveillance and control of the state and corporations since interactions that are not surveilled risk producing a radical social transformation of society.

School is like a pill that helps people adapt to the madness of modern society. We live our life. We don't do homework because this experience is fulfilling in itself, we don't do it on our own terms or in our own ways, we do it because it is what we are told we must do.

School imposes a tempo that regiments our life (8 am to 4 pm), necessary for the modeling of future docile workers. Parents, busy working, don't have a choice about whether to send their kids to school or not, and comfort themselves by believing that their children are receiving an appropriate education.

Instead of living at the rhythm of their community, learning through daily activities and contributing to the well-being of the group, the child is regimented by the state as they are being shaped by it.

To respond to the needs of production, parents force their kids to get up early in order to send them to school while school puts itself in charge of establishing a discipline for the exploited.

It punishes children because they are not sitting properly, because they talk to their classmates, because they don't listen, because they sleep on their desks, because they simply don't want to do an activity at a specific moment. Since elementary school, we are bored and we are given orders.

School, like religion, TV, and video games, finishes by destroying the child. It kills the creativity to freely express their desires and frustrations to instead transform them into a zombie - an adult, constantly in the process of managing their future, their professional career, their retirement plan, and their funeral - and denying the present moment.

School forces children to develop an understanding of the world that corresponds to the hierarchical organization of society and the uniformity of knowledge. We are taught that there is only one correct way to read and write, only one version of history, only one correct way to express oneself in public.

School insures that the future adult will be functional in our society, that they will be capable of responding in the appropriate manner to their boss, appreciate mass culture, believe in the words of technocrats concerned with their security and

the promises of scientists to resolve environmental problems. At the end of high school comes the stress of planning a future career, lectures on how to have a professional orientation, and dead-end meetings with the guidance counselor. Without even realizing it, you are convinced to go into such and such field, depending on the needs of the market.

The analysis by Daniel Quinn is very enlightening in his *Schooling: The Hidden Agenda*. He notes that "at the heart of our cultural matrix, all the media tell us that schooling exists to prepare children for success and for the accomplishment of their life in our civilization (and they fail even at that)."

Reform after reform, school always fails. Quinn then reverses the question: "Suppose that school isn't failing? Suppose that it's doing exactly what it's supposed to do?" What are the things that it does extremely well?

First off, it does an excellent job at keeping youth outside the job market and thus stops the country from being flooded by millions of unemployed youth because of a lack of employment. Instead of becoming part of the labor force at twelve years old, they become active consumers, spending thousands of dollars of merchandize from money earned by their parents.

During the industrialization of western societies, agriculture required fewer and fewer hands, and youth found themselves in the streets and alleyways of the new industrial cities; in order to keep them off the streets, what better thing than to force them to attend school?

According to Quinn, the solution was to add new elements to the curriculum to make school longer. The children were never asked if that is what they wanted or needed to know, or if they'd never need to know it. It didn't really matter if once learned, everything is immediately forgotten - the purpose was to keep them busy.

After the economic crash in 1929, it became necessary to keep youth out of the labor market for as long as possible. At the end of the Second World War, we started to hear that education should include a time in community college, if necessary, and then in university. They need to always be given more poems to analyze, more pages of history and literature to read, and more equations to solve. At the same time, youth continued to leave school without knowing much more than what was learned in elementary school a century ago and were still not employable.

School isn't failing, it is succeeding but in a way that we would prefer not to see. Producing graduates without competencies, without survival values, and with no other option but to work or die of hunger. These aren't accidents of the system, ►►



these are the nature of the system.

► So, why do we continue to go to school?

For the same reason that we don't revolt. The power to reward and to punish, to make individuals used to desired ways of thinking and acting, is part of the goal of integrating the individual into a hierarchical social order. High school is yet another way to make this integrating function more efficient and more total in its effects. The purpose of university is to make it so that the individual better adapts to a new set of social conditions created by advanced capitalism.

What I found in university wasn't individuals who were more intelligent than the rest of the population, but rather multiple pretentious and docile youth, coming from privileged families, having attended private schools or elite programs, speaking the same language as those who govern us.

University is the place where youth learn to respect the rules of the game imposed by the state. In the student assemblies, we see young careerists and future bureaucrats who are interested in building their CV and thus being in a better social position when they apply for a job in politics, the unions, or the NGO's. At the intellectual level, the students are nothing other than superficial beings who will spend most of their time debating a commodified reality; they learn concepts as though these were concrete things. We can count thousands of incompetent graduates each year.

Coming from privileged environments and private schools, almost all these students take themselves for science-priests, art stars, neurotic psychologists, journalist-cops, and politician-dogs. 30 classes, 45 hours a

class, and there, you get out with a piece of paper and a recognition from a professional order in exchange for a fee.

Then, you shuffle in a lab always repeating the same gestures or in a center of some kind for pacifying youth who have had enough of their dysfunctional family and of the laws that block their access from the things valued by our society. If that's not satisfying, there's always the possibility to bow down before your master in a superior position, to then become the one who watches students from the front of the room. University is a factory where practical incompetents and specialists in compartmentalized knowledge are produced.

The industrial system has found in the education model a rational way to domesticate the exploited, thus allowing for easier recuperation of resistance by redirecting it into institutional channels, like union negotiation or political reformism. The rebels who have interiorized the values transmitted by school try to retouch the repressive machine, rather than destroy it, and a domesticated child is one who only expresses themselves in the moment that the teacher (the state) allows them.

Authentic rebellion starts in the streets and then builds alternatives both to corporatized universities and to the dominant society.

A version of this appeared in "En suspense", a pamphlet written during the 2012 student strike in Quebec. It was translated for the *Fifth Estate* in Montreal.

## A short history of schools

The word school comes from the Latin word *schola* meaning "free time consecrated to learning," an institution idealized by the philosophers and ideologues and perceived as being a socially valued category, in opposition to the sphere of manual or productive labor.

In early civilizations, school was created by scribes and other government functionaries who occupied religious and administrative posts. Among the ancient Greeks, school had the purpose of training future soldiers before it was transformed to teach philosophy and rhetoric by the Sophists for the children of the rich who would never have to work.

When the Roman empire began to expand, so did the influence of the Greeks, and schools started to have the training of future functionaries as their objective. Christianity developed within the Greco-Roman civilization, and it incorporated the intellectualism of the Greeks and the severity of the Romans into its own educational practices, putting on a pedestal the Western image of a man who is kneeling before the law and who is ready to sacrifice for an ideal.

Monastic schools appeared in the 4th century. Cathedral schools were created in the 11th century and their programs became increasingly more complex until the 16th century, when the first universities were born. The elementary schools among the Christians, starting in the 17th century, were founded primarily to Christianize people and to combat the "laziness of the poor."

With the Renaissance, the goal of discipline became even more central to the educational project, and in the 18th century schools began to systematically evaluate students, to organize the classrooms by rows, put the students in age categories, and organize a series of subjects taught in order of increasing difficulty. National schools were established to create a more homogenous citizenry. Students were taught that they did not belong to themselves, but rather to the nation.

The advocates of public schools (the Humanists) were primarily interested in integrating the masses into the new industrial economy and in diminishing the social tensions created by increasingly greater inequalities. The children of proletarians had to be educated efficiently for the developing industrial capitalist economy: the centralization of decisions, individual writing, the standardization of the curriculum and mandatory uniforms. Education thus acquired its institutional character. This development, which paved the road for the bureaucracies of the 20th century, was essential to the reproduction of the new industrial social order as well as capitalist social relationships.

It was also over the course of the 19th century (in 1871 in the US) that school began to be perceived as an effective medium for the assimilation and acculturation of Indigenous peoples and immigrants to the dominant white society.

To insure the loyalty of the working classes, the state created a system of mandatory education for all. In 1900, the majority of US states had their own public schools and in 1915, corporations were spending more money on post-secondary education than governments. The management of the education system was based on a scientific management strategy developed by Frederick W. Taylor (based on organization by task). After World War II, different governments around the world adopted universal elementary school education as a main objective. In industrial societies, high school education took on an increasingly greater importance with the increasing complexity of technologies of social control and a more complex division of labor.

A version of this appeared in "En suspense," inspired by *Toward the Destruction of Schooling* by Jan D. Matthews, [anti-politics.net/school](http://anti-politics.net/school).



# ARE “BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS” MORE ACCURATELY REBELLION AGAINST AUTHORITY?

## Anti-Authoritarian Personalities & Standard Schools

BRUCE E. LEVINE

**M**ark Twain, one of America's most beloved anti-authoritarians, gave young people sound advice: “Never let your schooling get in the way of your education.”

Do most schools teach us:

- To be self-directed—or directed by others?
- That relationships should be respectful—or manipulated by rewards and punishments?
- That you can exit from boring and abusive surroundings—or that you must endure them?
- That you can choose your path of learning — or that you must submit to any and all authorities?
- To seek the authoritative—or comply with the authoritarian?

The nature of most classrooms, regardless of the subject matter, socializes students to be passive and directed by others, to follow orders, to take seriously the rewards and punishments of authorities, to pretend to care about things they don't care about, and to realize they are impotent to affect their situation. Standard schools demand compliance with hierarchy, including compliance with authorities whom one does not necessarily respect.

Anti-authoritarian teachers know this. John Taylor Gatto, accepting the New York City Teacher of the Year Award on January 31, 1990, was blunt:

The truth is that schools don't really teach anything except how to obey orders. This is a great mystery to me because thousands of humane, caring people work in schools as teachers and aides and administrators, but the abstract logic of the institution overwhelms their individual contributions.

Authoritarians equate success with gaining the rewards of authorities. Former teacher and school critic Alfie Kohn, in *Punished by Rewards*, describes entire childhoods turned into one continuous attempt to prepare for Harvard—“Preparation H.”

Kohn tells of speaking to a group of these high-achieving authoritarian students. When he was finished, a 16-year-old boy said, “You're telling us not to just get in a race for the traditional rewards. What else is there?” Kohn reflected that here was a teenager who was highly successful by conventional standards, but “there was a large hole where his soul should have been.”

By contrast, anti-authoritarian students are often disruptive, both passively and actively. And these days, teachers increasingly refer them to mental health professionals who routinely give these kids diagnoses such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and opposition defiant disorder (ODD).

Today, a young Albert Einstein would likely receive an ADHD and an ODD diagnosis. Albert didn't pay attention to his teachers and failed his

college entrance examinations twice. However, Einstein biographer Ronald Clark (*Einstein: The Life and Times*) asserts that Albert's problems did not stem from attention deficits but rather from his hatred of authoritarian, Prussian discipline in his schools.

Einstein said, “The teachers in the elementary school appeared to me like sergeants and in the Gymnasium the teachers were like lieutenants.” After he did enter college, one professor told Einstein, “You have one fault; one can't tell you anything.” The truth is that the anti-authoritarian Einstein didn't reject all authorities, only the ones that didn't know what they were talking about.

There is nothing essentially disordered with ADHD labeled kids. As I document in *Commonsense Rebellion*, kids labeled with ADHD do pay attention when an activity is novel, interests them, or is chosen by them, or when they are getting paid for it; and biochemical explanations of ADHD don't scientifically hold up. These kids, for the most part, simply resist boring tasks that do not interest them or when the only reward is a good grade from a teacher. Many of them are essentially anti-authoritarians.

What does explain these kids' classroom behavior? While authoritarians recoil at the idea of comparing school to prison, anti-authoritarian kids don't. For these kids, school feels like jail, and they behave similarly to others who experience subjugation. John Holt's *How Children Fail* (1964) details this.

Holt reminds us that in German concentration camps many of the prisoners, attempting “to save both their lives and something of their dignity, and to resist, despite their impotence, the demands of their jailers . . . [adopted] an air of amiable dull-wittedness, of smiling foolishness, of cooperative and willing incompetence. . . . Told to do something, they listened attentively, nodded their heads eagerly, and asked questions that showed they had not understood a word of what had been said.” This same strategy was also used by enslaved Africans on plantations.

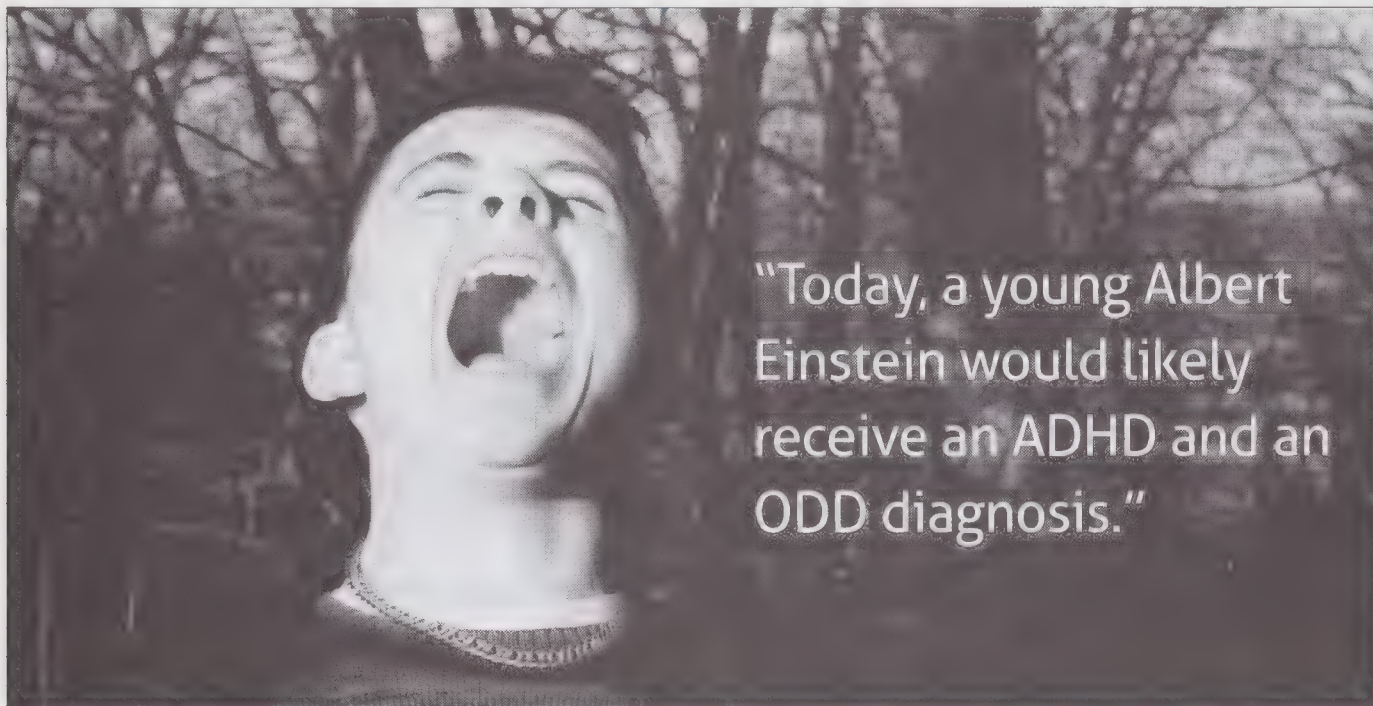
Subjugated people, including anti-authoritarian kids in a classroom, attempt to appease their rulers while still satisfying some part of their own desire for dignity. They do this, Holt said, “by putting on a mask, by acting much more stupid and incompetent than they really are, by denying their rulers the full use of their intelligence and ability, by declaring their minds and spirits free of their enslaved bodies.”

By “going stupid” in the classroom, children frustrate authorities through withdrawing the most intelligent and creative parts of their minds from the scene, achieving some sense of potency — a problematic one, however, as some of these kids begin to believe they actually are stupid or do have ADHD. “Going stupid” is one reason for ADHD and other so-called “mental illnesses.”

While anti-authoritarian kids who more passively resist authorities are often diagnosed with ADHD, young anti-authoritarians who are more open and direct about their resistance to illegitimate authorities are routinely diagnosed with oppositional defiant disorder (ODD). The symptoms of ODD include “often actively defies or refuses to comply with adult requests or rules” and “often argues with adults.” Only authoritarians don't find it laughable that these “symptoms” constitute a disorder. ODD kids are essentially young anti-authoritarians.

I once consulted with a teacher about an extremely bright eight-year-old ►►





boy who routinely defied his teachers and was labeled with ODD. I suggested that perhaps the boy didn't have a disease, but was just bored. His teacher, a pleasant woman, agreed with me. However, she added, "They told us at the state conference that our job is to get them ready for the work world. . . that the children have to get used to not being stimulated all the time or they will lose their jobs in the real world." The teacher told me this quite innocently, in no way attempting to make some dark political point.

Can standard schools be reformed? According to school critic Jonathan Kozol, teachers wishing to see schools less rigid and less oppressive, "are not willing to confront that the one, *exclusive and historic function* of the system is counter to these goals."

Kozol reminds us that maintaining a hierarchy and the indoctrination of workers to institutionalized life—first to the factory and later to bureaucracy—has always been the clear-cut function of the public schools.

In 1844, Horace Mann, the first secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Education, addressed himself to business interests:

"Could there, in your opinion, be any police so vigilant and effective, for the protection of all rights of person, property and character, as such as a sound and comprehensive education and training as our system of common schools could be made to impart? . . . Would not the payment

of sufficient tax to make such training universal, be the cheapest means of self-protection and insurance?"

I am in my fifties, and I still have nightmares about school. When I go into a school to vote, to see a play, or for some other innocuous reason, I still get anxious, my stomach gets upset, and I just want to run from the building. I used to joke that school gave me post-traumatic stress disorder. But maybe it's no joke.

A great pain reduction in my young life came when the New York City teachers went out on strike my first year of junior high school. But then the strike ended, and the authorities decided to extend class periods to make up for "lost learning," and the ordinary torture of a school day became an extraordinarily torturous one.

Ivan Illich, in his classic *Deschooling Society* (1970), offers an anti-authoritarian alternative to standard authoritarian schooling. Instead of schools there would be:

- **Skill Exchanges:** Persons list their skills and the conditions under which they are willing to serve as models for others who want to learn these skills.
- **Peer Matching:** A communication network which permits persons to describe the learning activity in which they wish to engage in hope of finding a partner for

inquiry.

- **Professional Educators:** Those with a reputation as master educators would provide experienced leadership when learners came to rough terrain. They would not make curriculum, discipline students, purchase textbooks, plan lessons or keep records. They would be advice givers, and book and apprenticeship recommenders. They would inspire intellectual discipline and curiosity.
- **Reference Services:** Not just libraries, but farms, laboratories, and more. "Deschooling the artifacts of education" requires making the artifacts available.

From my experience, while most anti-authoritarian kids disliked their schooling and couldn't wait to exit from it, they would be enthusiastic learners in Illich's deschooled educational model.

**Bruce E. Levine**, a practicing clinical psychologist, writes and speaks about how society, culture, politics and psychology intersect. His latest book is *Get Up, Stand Up: Uniting Populists, Energizing the Defeated, and Battling the Corporate Elite*. His Web site is [www.brucelevine.net](http://www.brucelevine.net)





March in support of the 2012 Quebec student strike. Banner reads, "When injustice is the law; resistance is our duty"

# THE QUEBEC STUDENT STRIKE

## RED SQUARES, BLACK FLAGS AND CASSEROLES

BY MARIA FORTI AND BECCA YU

**T**he 2012 Québec student general strike lasted for six months, between February and September. Participation peaked at around 300,000 out of 420,000 university and CEGEP (junior colleges) students in the province. During the high points, demonstrations took to the streets multiple times daily with growing militancy met with rampant police violence, especially during marches taking place after dark.

The symbol of the strike was a red square. People supporting the strike pinned small red squares to their clothes and hung large ones on their balconies and spray painted them on sidewalks and buildings.

Government legislation attempting to end the strike only increased street presence. Though the strike has ended, 500 people face criminal charges and thousands more were issued tickets, most often for illegal assembly.

In March 2011, when a tuition hike was announced in the governing Québec Liberal Party's budget, the push for a strike started. Opposition began almost immediately as

students occupied university administrations' offices; the following November tens of thousands went on strike for a day and many took to the streets.

In February 2012, an unlimited general strike commenced. Strike votes began during the first week with 20,000 students voting to strike. For months there were demonstrations, blockades, and three occupations as well as constant strike-related activity, including mobilisation for more strike votes, blocking and disrupting classes, semi-nude marches, creative projects such as art, banner-making, and knitting, and strike sleepovers.

The first serious injury occurred during the first month of the strike. On March 7, students occupied an office while supporters faced riot police outside the building. The cops used three sound grenades, the first time during the strike, and injuries resulting from one of them caused a demonstrator to lose sight in one eye.

Demonstrations were largely spontaneous with no pre-determined route or organizer, and this set the tone throughout the strike. Mobilization was so strong that demonstrations could be called as little as an hour ahead of

time and hundreds of people would show up. This meant there was little to no ownership of demonstrations and no established leaders in the streets.

By March 22, 316,000 out of 420,000 students in Québec were on strike (some just for the day). 250,000 students and non-students took to the streets of downtown Montréal to mark the first month anniversary of the strike in what would become a strike tradition, as from March onwards, the 22nd of each month was marked by giant demonstrations. It became obvious that a lot of people weren't in the streets just because of student related issues, as their banners and signs carried messages about many different social issues.

Taking place during the day, often with a large, visible anarchist presence, these demos often had a festive atmosphere, moving slowly and creating a space where parents, children, non-status people, and others needing to avoid police violence could feel relatively safe as these were some of the few times during the strike where police intervention was minimal.

Based on how past strikes had gone, in March many people expected the government and the student associations to start making progress ►►



► in negotiations. With this in mind, the CLASSE, an anarchist-influenced student federation, called for a week of economic disruptions, with targeted demonstrations up to five times each day. Most actions were organized anonymously or through student associations. The CLASSE itself did little of the organizing and served mostly to centralize information on their website.

Militancy rose among demonstrators and pressure on the government increased through economic blockades. Targets for blockades included bridges, the Banque Nationale headquarters, highways, the province-run liquor retailer, and office buildings. The fancy Hotel Queen Elizabeth and the Education Minister's office were trashed.

By the end of March, demonstrations were taking to the streets daily. Masks, to protect participants from profiling and chemical irritants, and Maalox mixed with water to wash out eyes after being pepper-sprayed, became normalized necessities. It was during this time that the strike and those participating seemed to increasingly be waging war on capitalism and the government rather than just the tuition hike.

Consecutive nightly demonstrations started in mid-April when the CLASSE was kicked out of the first round of government negotiations; the other student unions walked out in solidarity. These night demonstrations continued until mid-August, often roaming around downtown Montréal with militant blocs smashing bank windows and confronting the police.

Three key days around this time were the demonstrations against the Plan Nord job recruitment event in April, May Day, and the ruling Liberal Party meeting in Victoriaville.

The Plan Nord, the \$80 billion Québec government plan to further colonize northern Québec and allow companies to devastate it for resources, has met considerable opposition from indigenous people living in that region. The demonstration was notable for being the first time people had seen Montreal cops run from protesters under a hail of rocks and bottles, and one of the first times that it became obvious that a lot of people weren't in the streets just because of student related issues.

The streets were filled with black and green flags and one of the many demonstrations called for this day had been organized by an indigenous solidarity group that was not affiliated with any of the student associations. This demonstration was also the first time the police of Montréal handed over the reigns to the



## The Orchestra

**7:58pm**

in this quiet, working class  
Montreal residential neighbourhood  
the orchestra starts  
one person  
walks slowly down her stairs  
sets a solitary rhythm  
taps a pot with an egg beater  
looks around hopefully

**8pm**

half way down the block  
a smiling grandfather  
and his shy teen grandson  
leave their apartment  
join her, walk behind  
beating their own rhythms  
tentatively spoons on frying pans

**8:02pm**

100 metres later, a mother and two girls  
run out their front door pots and pans  
clanging  
now 6 people strong  
this percussion group  
walking, smiling, drumming louder

**8:05pm**

on the next corner  
three similar small groups  
join in, now over 30  
beating their own rhythms  
on kitchenware  
still walking on the sidewalk

**8:10pm**

on the next corner 3 more groups  
join swelling the group to over 50  
percussionists  
now officially — according to the new Law  
restricting demonstrations —  
an 'illegal gathering' with no permit  
subject to immediate arrest and fines

**8:15pm**

they turn the corner  
hundreds of them beating pots and pans  
dozens more residents contribute  
rhythms from their balconies  
as the marchers pass

**8:30pm**

now over 1,000 strong, swelling with pride  
sharing joyous, feverish urban tribal  
percussion  
another nightly free concert  
marching 30 abreast in the street  
no destination in mind  
stopping cars everywhere  
some drivers honking, smiling, thumbs up  
bar customers stepping outside cheering  
this multi-neighbourhood orchestra  
supporting striking students  
denouncing unjust laws  
marching, protesting  
and still growing  
call it magic

-Norman Nawrocki



# Québec

From page 31

provincial police who arrested 90 protestors.

This trend continued in Victoriaville, a small town an hour outside of Montréal, as the Québec provincial police fought to maintain some semblance of order during a meeting of the Liberal Party and its supporters by spraying mass amounts of teargas and shooting rubber bullets indiscriminately. Injuries from this demonstration included the second serious eye injury of the strike, as well as someone suffering a coma after being hit in the head by a rubber bullet.

Squeezed in the middle of these two actions was Montréal's annual anti-capitalist May Day demonstration. Two May Day marches occur annually in Montreal, one organized by the unions and the other by an anti-capitalist coalition. Unlike at Plan Nord and The Battle of Victo, as Victoriaville came to be known, the anti-capitalist May Day demo ended early in the evening because of innovative police tactics that were unlike anything else seen during the strike despite the presence of the one of the biggest Black Blocs until this demo.

People, however, were not just fighting the cops in the streets. Pickets and class disruptions continued on all the universities and CEGEPs where the strike was still in effect. In response, the provincial courts started issuing injunctions at the request of anti-strike students. At least 38 were issued, making it illegal for demonstrators to stop students from attending class. In practice, it meant that riot police began breaking up picket lines outside of schools, often spraying chemical irritants and causing administrators to close down the schools anyways.

Negotiations between student federation spokespersons and the government started up and broke down twice as the atmosphere in the streets became more and more militant. The connections between what was happening in the streets and what was happening at the negotiating table are complicated, but suffice to say that riots in the streets sometimes lead to the government being more willing to negotiate and when negotiations stalled or stopped, the atmosphere in the streets changed accordingly.

In May, the Liberal Party provincial government passed what became known as Special Law 78, which, among other things, made gatherings of more than 50 people illegal unless the participants gave their route and time

line to the police in advance. It also imposed heavy fines on student associations who advocated striking and banned demonstrations within a certain distance of a university campus.

Finally, the law ended the semester for striking students and set the date for a return to class for a shortened term in August. Students were essentially locked out of their classes and the struggle moved from the university campuses to the neighbourhoods of Montréal and surrounding areas. Immediate responses to this law also included three days of militant demonstrations involving molotov cocktails, widespread use of masks (The Montréal city council had just passed an anti-mask law), and demonstrators bravely rushing police lines to break open kettles (when the police encircle a group of protesters in preparation for a mass arrest).



Whole neighborhood participated in demonstrations and assemblies, not just students. People wore red scarfs to show their solidarity. photo: Norman Nawrocki

Within a week daily spontaneous neighbourhood demonstrations began. Called casseroles, these demonstrations were a practice borrowed from Latin America where participants bang on pots and pans in the streets. They were followed by autonomous neighbourhood assemblies to support the strike, where non-students stepped up their involvement in the struggle, creating legal support committees and calling for a general strike.

In early August, Québec Premier Jean Charest called an election for the beginning of September, many people realized that the strike was coming up against its biggest challenge yet. After months of direct democracy and

autonomous organizing, students would have to decide whether or not they trusted government enough to surrender their power in the streets and face the polls instead. When the shortened semester began on August 13, many were gearing up for a return to the streets, but as the first few students returned to their general assemblies, the votes started coming back negative. Students were returning to class.

The election took place on September 4. The Parti Québécois (PQ) won a minority government and Charest lost his seat in the provincial parliament and subsequently his position as head of the Liberal Party. Pauline Marois, the new premier of Québec, canceled the tuition hike, pending a summit on university education. She also repealed the part of Law 78 that dealt with demonstrations, though it is unclear if this includes the restrictions on organizing strikes on university campuses.

The strike died for a few key reasons. One was burn-out. The non-stop strike activity took its toll and many found themselves emotionally and physically needing a break. Police brutality and the courts also played their part. Next, the suspension of the semester due to Law 78 resulted in a lock-out during the summer, which meant a critical loss of momentum. Then, the election came along, and many people decided to put their trust in government, campaign against the Liberal Party and return to class.

Clearly, as anarchists, we think the struggle is far from over. The PQ only repealed Law 78 and the tuition hike in an act of political opportunism, and will have its own brand of austerity measures and anti-immigrant legislation. Arrests from the strike total in the thousands. Trials will stretch on for years.

Some are still under severe restrictions, including three people who were exiled from Montréal, and many others who face curfews, non-association, and other conditions. We've had a taste of what it's like to be in the streets every day, what it feels like when cops turn and run from us, what we can accomplish with our friends and strangers alike.

We can't erase the downfalls of the strike; namely, the lack of anti-colonial, anti-racist sentiment outside a dedicated minority, the reliance on democratic structures, and the inherent reformism of a strike against a tuition hike even when accompanied by the demand to end the commodification of education.

Things can never return to normal, even as classes started again. For many of us, the struggle began before the 2012 strike and it continues in its wake.

This was never just about free education.



# UNSCHOOLING AND FREE SCHOOLS

So education can begin

BY MARIKE REID-GAUDET

I'm interested in unschooling because it's an applied philosophy rather than a teaching method. This philosophy, which I strive to use daily with my son, who is now 16 years old, is also the one used in free schools. For me, this approach to life and to children's development encourages independence, confidence, and pleasure in living. Experiencing unschooling with my son has permitted us to go beyond the simple accumulation of knowledge.

A.S. Neil comes to mind when discussing freeschools. A radical educator, psychoanalyst, and friend of Wilhelm Reich, he founded Summerhill school in Suffolk, England in 1921 which continues operating to this day. The founding principles of this free school were freedom and self management, with the child being the master of their learning.

Neil believed that children only learn things when they want to learn them. He also thought that traditional education forms created easily manipulated and docile individuals who conform to the needs of consumer society. The freedom at Summerhill is the rejection of the expert, of the teacher who possesses all knowledge.

Ivan Illich, the remarkable critic of industrial society and author, was also interested in the link between school and society. In 1961, he established the Centro Intercultural de Documentación Cuernavaca, Mexico. Illich considered descolarization necessary for freeing people from the consumerist ideology taught in schools in advanced capitalist societies, and he postulated the idea that one should try to imagine the separation of school and the state.

His Cuernavaca workshop, until he closed it in 1976, was an incubator where many revolutionary educators, including Paul Goodman (anarchist writer and poet, author of *Growing Up Absurd*, Paulo Freire, Brazilian educator and author, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and John Holt, (American proponent of home schooling who coined the neologism, "unschooling"), discussed how to change society.

Holt was a fervent promoter of educational reforms. After teaching in Colorado for several years in the 1950s, he moved to Boston to participate in a study about how children learn. For a year he didn't teach, but only observed classes to see children in learning situations.



Following his experience as a researcher and teacher, Holt wrote *How Children Fail* in 1964, emphasizing that children live in fear in school, afraid of giving the wrong answer, afraid of not being good enough. Besides fear, lack of interest in subjects imposed on children explained the level of failures at many schools.

In 1967, in *How Children Learn*, Holt demonstrated how children's natural learning process is short-circuited by schools. Believing that schools couldn't be reformed (he equated them with prisons), Holt sought a true alternative to the educational institution, and spent the rest of his life trying to imagine and create ways of changing the educational paradigm. In 1977, he launched the magazine *Growing Without Schooling*, whose articles focused on how to go from schooling to unschooling.

The term unschooling defines how families live and learn outside of schools and their compulsory and institutional curriculums. Holt did not exclude the possibility that unschoolers use curriculums or follow courses with a traditional approach to teaching. But the determining factor is that the child chooses what, when, why and how they want to learn; the child is responsible for and controls their learning.

This approach postulates that learning, like motivation, is intrinsic in each individual; that learning begins and ends with oneself and should not be subjected to a predetermined corpus of knowledge that responds to a demand made by the society. The role of parents is to encourage children's curiosity, to assist them in their projects and experiments.

The term unschooling, according to Holt, could also be known as self-directed learning, centered on the child's interests, or as natural or organic

learning, and later became associated with a type of education at home that doesn't use a fixed and standard curriculum. He defined unschooling as according children the maximum freedom in the context of learning, within the limits of where their parents are comfortable.

For Holt, it meant living and learning together, following interests and questions as they appear, learning the way we do before we go to school and the way we do after leaving it—following interests that lead children and adults to read texts, take classes, and initiate projects.

The significant difference is that activities are freely chosen and realized by the learner. They are not dictated nor imposed through a curriculum that determines at which specific moment and at which specific place learning must take place, even though parents will certainly influence and guide their children.

Learning how to read or to resolve complicated math equations is not natural, but unschooled children decide to learn this type of material when it makes sense for them, and not at a predetermined age. School is based on the memorization of what teacher and the state mandate must be learned.

Our educational system is formatted on the industry model, with the bell, the desks in a row, and children separated by age. Born with the beginning of the industrialization, this model exists for producing the factory workers and consumers of capitalist system. Because the free school believes in the child as a natural learner who should be in charge of their own education, they and unschooling philosophy are a way to



# NEW ORLEANS FREE SCHOOL NETWORK

We are all students, We are all teachers.

BY KATE SMASH AND ESTHER MARTIN

"In the New Orleans Free School Network, people are there because they want to be. There are no grades, people are free to participate, but they don't have to."

This is how John Clark, Loyola University professor, activist, and a network founding organizer, understands the difference between traditional education and the alternative he and others established in 2010.

When we visited his house earlier this year, Clark greeted us warmly and showed us into his dining room. What we saw filled us with joy and surprise: a packed room full of about twenty young people eager to learn about anarchist theory. No one paid to be there, no one was being paid to be there; they were simply there to learn.

It was this moment that the endless potential of the Free School struck. A dining room can be a classroom; anywhere can be a classroom, a space free of bureaucratic and monetary constraints, where the only exchange is that of ideas and perhaps a bowl of red beans and rice.

The New Orleans Free School Network (NOFSN) was born from this kind of anti-authoritarian enthusiasm for education.

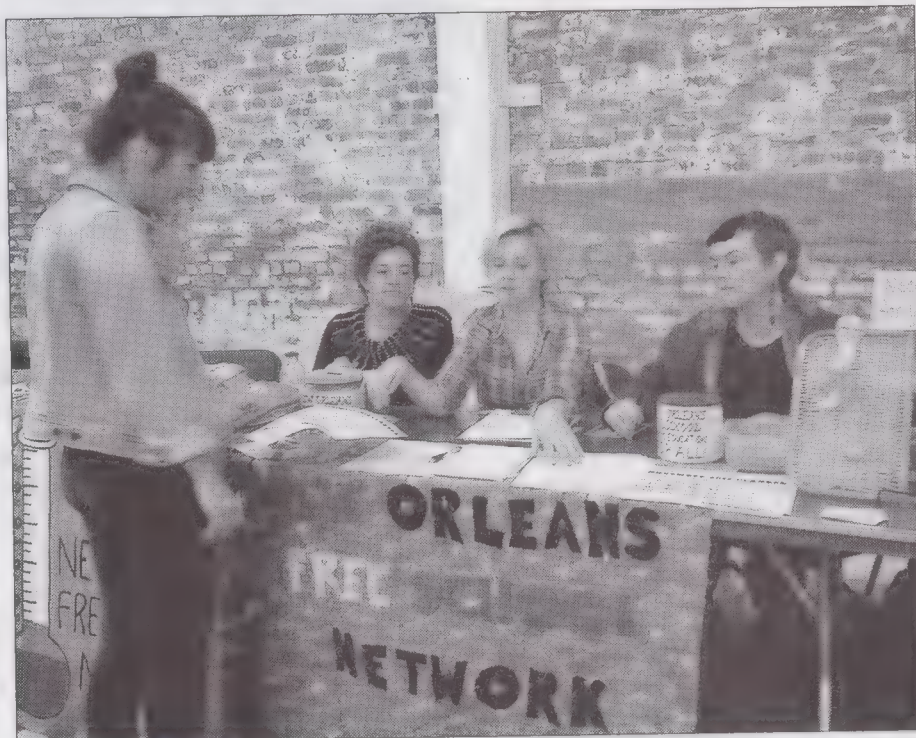
In December 2010, a group of activists from all over the country gathered to create the network sharing a passion for social justice, alternative economies, and most of all, the development of accessible, relevant, community-based education. We were all inspired by the rapidly spreading Free School (or Skool) movement, with different networks and groups popping up all over world.

## Anarchist Politics

Frank Boomer, a NOFSN founding member, says he was inspired by the activities of Free Schools in Washington DC and Baltimore. "I saw people doing radical GED classes for people with language barriers, and I thought that would be really cool in New Orleans."

In the beginning, the organizers all shared the anarchist politics of many other Free School projects, believing that traditional education was hierarchal, oppressive, and stifled the potential of the mind and spirit.

We were moved by the theory and practice



Registration at the New Orleans Free School.

of Paulo Freire and other radical educators who encouraged us to deconstruct the power imbalance in education, to challenge the patriarchal notion that students are simply empty heads to be filled and teachers are ultimate authorities. We were all tired of knowledge being held hostage in a cage of institutional authority and knew there had to be another way.

Knowledge is meant to be exchanged, not transacted.

These are politics we still uphold now, almost two years later. "We are all students, we are all teachers," the slogan we have held dear from the beginning, concisely expresses these politics. It is a simple slogan, but is in no way a simple idea.

Everyone knows how to do something, whether cooking, dancing, or writing, but not everyone believes they can teach these skills. Further, many people are hesitant to accept that these things they do are in fact skills.

We seek to dispel the notion that one must be an expert in order to share and broaden

the narrow scope of what counts as legitimate knowledge. There is no reason why a physics class should take priority over a cooking class. These hierarchies silence the voices of those who have valuable things to share with their communities. The network provides an infrastructure to amplify these voices.

## Blurring the Line

By blurring the line between teacher and student, people start to realize their knowledge is valid and important, that they don't need a university degree to share their skills.

Many teachers have expressed that they've learned a great deal from their students, or perhaps gained a new perspective on their skill.

Brett Guadagnino, a long time NOFSN teacher, says he values this kind of input in his World in Knots class. "There's always multiple ways to tie knots, some are faster, whether left or right handed. I found many times with more basic knots, people knew how to tie them different



► ways.

Learning how to teach something in different ways gives you a more complex way of understanding." This radical outlook on teaching keeps classes dynamic and accessible to everyone.

The original organizers gained inspiration not only from their own radical ideas and research, but also from the long and prolific history of Free Schools around the world. Many people have come in and out of the network, but every single one entered the project with some previous knowledge of other Free Schools. From California to Toronto, radical education is spreading rapidly, like weeds breaking through concrete.

Free Schools all over the world may have common roots, but grow and germinate in various ways. NOFSN's decision to add "Network" to our name was an effort to be consistent with our mission to provide free education for all. We understood the limits of our budding organization, but knew how to maximize our potential and resources.

### Young Radical Transplants

New Orleans is an incredibly diverse, yet insular city where neighborhoods and communities stay close. We knew it would be impossible for a group of young radical transplants, some of us new arrivals to New Orleans, to reach the entire city with our classes. We decided that our network should stretch beyond our own web of classes, but also other free community classes around New Orleans. Our online calendar is not limited to the classes proposed though our structure, but full of free classes and opportunities all over the city, all diverse both in subject and location.

Recently, we have added a kids and teens section to our calendar to highlight free classes for young people. We recognize the dire need for children and teens to have fun and educational opportunities outside of their official schools. A high crime rate paired with a low graduation rate of 49.7 percent makes it obvious that getting New Orleans kids into positive learning environments is crucial to their health and safety.

Several schools in New Orleans have

**"While we recognize we are in no position to replace traditional schooling, we seek to be a liberating supplement; a breath of fresh air."**

eliminated recess, for either lack of budget or to accommodate a packed curriculum, so students sit all day in sterile buildings with few outlets for creative stimulation. The NOFSN recognizes that children need physical and creative exercise in order to learn and grow.

To help address this, we developed "Field Days" as an outdoor educational activity day for all ages. These events take place in parks and public spaces and include food, games, sports, and skill building activities. This decentralized, autonomous space is a safe and fun way for children to get exercise and educational attention outside of their school institution.

While we recognize we are in no position to replace traditional schooling, we seek to be a liberating supplement; a breath of fresh air. While NOFSN does not yet offer our own kids classes, we strongly support other youth educators and are hoping to start kid's classes and workshops in the near future.

One difficulty preventing us from having children's classes is a lack of a schoolhouse. Not having a consistent funding source has prevented us from creating our own space, though there are many plans to address this currently being discussed.

### DIY Nature

While having a building would be a wonderful resource, we also embrace the decentralized, DIY nature of our activities and classes. Our classes take place in community centers, dining rooms, backyards, and outdoors. We enjoy having a visible and viral presence.

The motivation and energy surrounding our activity is contagious. Since its energetic

origin, our project has grown and evolved considerably. We have seven dedicated organizers and countless supporters, and have supported more than 60 classes, many of them ongoing and facilitated by a changing and collaborative group of teachers.

They include everything from food fermentation to carpentry, to Russian, American Sign Language, human sexuality, and philosophy. The course structures vary from more traditional models such as discussion sessions and presentations to the hands on practice of skills.

The classes have grown into their own communities. Lena, our dedicated knitting teacher, says, "People in my class are calling me, asking me knitting questions! I can't stop doing it because they would all be disappointed."

Our harm reduction class and human sexuality working group are providing invaluable resources and support to our community. The Introduction to Time Banking course is creating an alternative to the capitalist economy, while Ladies Night has been smashing the patriarchy even before they became a NOFSN class!

NOFSN has become a self-sustaining entity. Organizers and teachers can come and go, but the network will continue to thrive. The decentralized nature of our organization lends to the network having a life of its own; we are simply there to take care of it.

See the network's web site [nolafreeschoolnetwork.blogspot.com](http://nolafreeschoolnetwork.blogspot.com) for class schedules and becoming involved.

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# MEXICO: REALITIES OF TOURISM

Behind the curtain lies the real country visitors rarely see

ROBERT JOE STOUT

"Leave us your money and go home" isn't published in Mexico's tourist propaganda, but is the underlying theme behind promoting maquilado México ("Mexico cosmetized").

The government "of, by and for entrepreneurs" spends billions to present a fairyland of bikini-clad young women strolling immaculately white beaches, smiling indigenas happily weaving straw ornaments, golf courses and five-star hotels transforming pre-Colonial excavations and Las Vegas-type performances simulating "authentic" folk festivals.

In this fabricated fairyland the realities of malnutrition, unemployment, war on drugs-related crime and political repression don't exist.

"The more money you have the more welcome you are" is extended not only to tourists but to investors and potential investors. Tourism as part of neoliberal marketing economy is a product like sugar, like steel, to be sold for the highest possible profit. Drug cartel domination of the countryside, shantytown slums, oil-crusted beaches mitigate profits; consequently, they have to be camouflaged and an alternative devised, an Oz splayed across curtains that prevent viewing what exists behind them.

Tourists in Mexico are much like late-night revelers in a dancehall or hotel lounge. That some of the locals are wearing heavy makeup or attired in contrived pseudo-opulence doesn't matter if they're entertaining to talk to, dance with, even spend the night with.

"A week's vacation, I came to relax, to enjoy myself. I can't change the world. I don't want to try," a visiting California mathematics professor told me. Enjoy what he could and not look beyond.

"Enjoy what you can" extends beyond tourism. It's the offering extended to the country's one-hundred and fifteen million inhabitants, the vast majority of whom watch television and listen to the radio.

Outgoing president Felipe Calderón's administration spent over twenty billion 500 million pesos—nearly one billion 700 million dollars—on publicity during his 2006-2012 presidential term "most of it misleading and much of entirely false," according to editorials in the Mexican newspaper *El Universal*. Those



As happens frequently in Mexico, police responded to ■ 2006 protest in the city of Oaxaca by indiscriminately beating demonstrators and bystanders.

figures don't include the billions poured out for the ornamental Estela de Luz monument in Mexico City, lavish centennial celebrations which only invited dignitaries were permitted to attend and alterations to historical sites, including the pyramids of Teotihuacán and the Basilica de Guadalupe.

The creators of Fantasyland Mexico understand that a population struggling economically to survive, men and women working two or three jobs, clinging to a few possessions, lacking both time and mobility, is relatively easy to control. The struggle to earn a living, to survive, creates intellectual passivity. Alcoholism increases, curiosity diminishes. Television replaces community—or becomes community, a common denominator, a cultural unifier. One-hundred and fifteen million people, from Tijuana on the U.S. border to Cancun on the Caribbean, see the same telenovelas, hear the same news analyses.

Although viewers perceive that in their own non-fairyland lives they confront very different, often degrading if not actually dangerous

circumstances, this Fantasyland-mirror, television, tells them that they are exceptions, that they are not in sync with the norm. Not only does it control—transform—individual and family life it supplants many aspects of communal life. Becomes a nationally shared pseudo reality.

That this pseudo-reality is trimmed in U.S. colors makes touristed places more comfortable for visitors. In them one can buy U.S. products, watch cable television, communicate through internet. Golf tours, nightclub tours, culinary tours proliferate. (No slum barrio tours or indigena village tours; slum barrios and poverty-wracked indigena villages don't exist in Fantasyland.) In many locations it's difficult if not impossible to find Mexican-made goods or Mexican-grown fruit or vegetables.

Even the drug corporations cooperate with the pretty picture painted for tourists. The few U.S. casualties among the more than 90,000 victims of so-called War on Drugs have been



# OCCUPYING THE CITADELS OF THE MIND

A Review of Two Insurgent Documents from the Frontlines of Educational Revolt (2009-2012)

BY RON SAKOLSKY

Two years before the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement came into being in September 2011, the notion of occupying physical space as an oppositional tactic was already in the air.

It had previously surfaced within the nexus of the sprawling California state educational complex in the Fall of 2009, and then the following year during the December 2010 uprising of UK students; in both cases amidst a backdrop of severe educational cutbacks and the governmental austerity measures of disaster capitalism.

And, like the subsequent "social strike" kicked off by Québec student unrest in 2012, previous insurgent student actions in California and London were about far more than simply the economy.

Indeed, even one of the most potent and widely known slogans of OWS, "Occupy Everything/Demand Nothing," had its origins in the militant acts and declarations of the 2009 California-based occupy movement. In turn, the California actions had in part been inspired by the occupation of the student center at the New School for Social Research in New York earlier that year. The more militant occupiers among the New School students had refused to settle for the reformist goal of ousting the university president, but had opted instead for the liberatory potential of creating a momentary opening in capitalist time and space free of demands for administrative concessions.

In *After The Fall's* "Occupation: A Do-It-Yourself Guide" the rationale for, and immediacy of, such a "no demands" strategy is explained in the exuberance of the California context:

"We must reject all options on offer and demonstrate that without negotiations it is still possible to act. This is why we do not make demands. All demands assume the existence of a power capable of conceding them. Why go through the motions of negotiation when we know we will not win anything but paltry concessions. There is no power to which we can appeal except that which we have found in one another. This is why we reject the logic of representation. No representative, no matter how charismatic, can achieve anything of consequence, except to deprive us of our own



December 10, 2010. The Rolls-Royce carrying England's Prince Charles and his wife Camilla drove through a group of protestors. Students shouted "off with their heads" & smashed a window.

## After the Fall: Communiqués from Occupied California

By Aragorn!

Edited by Little Black Cart Books, Berkeley, 2010. This free newspaper publication is presently out of print, but can be downloaded at [afterthefallcommuniques.info](http://afterthefallcommuniques.info).

One of the key essays, "We Are The Crisis," appears in *Occupy Everything: Anarchists in the Occupy Movement*, 2009-2011 by Aragorn!, Little Black Cart Books, Berkeley, 2012, 258pp, \$15

## A User's Guide To Demanding the Impossible

By Gavin Grindon and John Jordan  
Minor Compositions/Autonomedia, London/Brooklyn, 2010, 64pp., \$8.

agency. Having representatives reduces us, once again, to passive onlookers upon our own activity. We have to take matters into our own hands."

For an incredible moment, on the California campuses of UC Santa Cruz, UCLA, UC

Berkeley, UC Davis, San Francisco State and CSU Fresno, the watchwords: "Strike/ Occupy/ Takeover," burned almost as brightly as the flames of the previous year's Greek insurrection. The scope of these California uprisings illuminated a flickering movement of insurrectional "communes" that were not seen merely as alternative spaces, but as nomadic war machines to be deployed in the ultimate destruction of capitalist society in accord with the anarchist and anti-state communist ideas of those who struck the match.

In this insurrectionary context, the "Communiqué From An Absent Future: On the Terminus of Student Life," signed by Research and Destroy, can be appreciated as a poetic expression of this occupation strategy. In their words:

"We demand not a free university but a free society. A free university in the midst of a capitalist society is like a reading room in a prison; it serves only as a distraction from the misery of daily life. Instead we seek to channel the anger of the dispossessed students and workers into a declaration of war. . . We must constantly expose the incoherence of the demands for democratization and transparency.

See CITADELS, page 38



## Citidals

From page 37

What good is it to have the right to see how intolerable things are, or to elect those who will screw us over? We must leave behind the culture of student activism, with its moralistic mantras of non-violence and its fixation on single-issue causes. All of our actions must push us towards communization; that is, the reorganization of society according to a logic of free giving and receiving."

This impassioned outcry was marked by the refusal of "social death," the negation of the illusion of "social peace," a strident call for "social rupture," and an affinity with the dual strategy of "civil war" and "communization" promulgated by the Invisible Committee in their widely circulated book, *The Coming Insurrection*.

In this expansive sense, occupying a building is only a first step in overthrowing the system of social relations and structures upon which the capitalist state is built. Beyond vehement opposition to the specifics of costly new university capital projects undertaken at the expense of student learning needs, the university's role as an already barricaded domain of class reproduction was challenged as a larger "anti-capital" project.

Not only were the coffers of the university bankrupt, but the whole idea of the university as a bastion of upward mobility and economic security had been replaced by the likelihood of a precarious economic future. Moreover, no longer could universities be conceived of as lively arenas of intellectual pursuit.

Rather, they had become professionalized, careerist, and corporate to the bone. Instead of inspiring free thinking, they had mainly become a machine for manufacturing compliant producers and consumers; offering most students only a one-way ticket on the down-bound train of debt slavery. Faced with the desolate prospects of university life and the doldrums of everyday reality, the occupation movement struck back, loudly proclaiming: "We Are the Crisis!"

Unlike the Berkeley student organizers of the Sixties, who fought under the banner of "Save The University," these more contemporary Berkeley student radicals in the occupy movement equated the inadequacy of such a slogan with a call to "Save The Prisons."

In fact, UC Berkeley students even uncovered

a university contract with San Quentin to use prison labor for supplying the school with classroom furniture. In rejecting Mario Savio's famous call for protesting Berkeley students in the Sixties to put their bodies on the "gears,

maneuver may not be necessary since the act of demanding the impossible is by definition qualitatively different from acting as if such demands can ever be satisfied within the rubric of "politics as the art of the possible" or enacted

**"The task of radical artists in this regard is to create such art in order to dismantle and reinvent daily life so as to 'step into the cracks where another world is coming into view.'"**

wheels and levers" of the university apparatus to make it come to a grinding halt so that meaningful negotiations could take place; one of the Berkeley occupiers quoted in "Voices From Wheeler Hall," a zine which is excerpted in *After The Fall*, explains:

"I disagree; we must dismantle the machine, from top down, so that it never starts again. We will use what we need and take what we need. We will occupy, we will appropriate and, in turn, we will liberate."

Insurrectionary-minded occupiers contended that the idea of an occupation is to attract energy to the resistance, not to negotiate a settlement. As a student communiqué from occupied Kerr Hall eloquently proclaimed, "An occupation is a vortex, not a protest."

In order to avoid cooptation, the Wheeler Hall students insisted that what was needed was "a displacement, not a fusion." Occupiers were urged to eschew liberalism by a slogan lifted from the Invisible Committee's pamphlet, *The Call*, and written on all the Wheeler Hall chalkboards: "Live communism, spread anarchy."

Rather than being entrapped in the legalities of negotiations: adventure, imagination, spontaneity and unbridled direct action were the (mis)rule of the day. Student governance types, well-meaning but clueless faculty "observers" and their conventional student activist counterparts, were all caught unawares by the uncompromising nature and seductive appeal of such a relentless strategy of "impossibility".

Which brings us to the UK student upheaval of November/December 2010 and the second publication under review here, *A User's Guide to Demanding The Impossible*.

This book decidedly crosses out the word "demanding" in its title to make a "demand nothing" point. However, such a verbal

within the configuration of power known as the capitalist state or state capitalism.

In essence, then, to demand the impossible is to inevitably reveal the impoverished nature of what are considered to be possible demands within the confines of consensus reality. The desired outcome is not related to the idea that radical demands can be realized through the process of reform, but that demanding reform within university politics will pale by comparison to a resistance based upon the unimpeded flight of our desires.

To meaningfully address the blight of the corporate university, we must step outside of the anemic submission-inducing reach of "reasonable possibility" and into the radical realm of the impossible where the very existence of all social institutions is called into question. The point is to act on our desires without the reformist restraint of "reasonability" clouding the radical ferocity of our vision.

On December 9, 2010, the Surrealist London Action Group (SLAG) issued its "New Alexandria" tract in solidarity with the unruly UK students. It is a case in point of demanding the impossible. Defending learning while attacking the university at its core, it reads in part:

"Those of us who have worked and studied on these intellectual factory farms know that education in this country has been nothing short of a disaster. Children fed poetry that's been reduced to the literary equivalent of Turkey Twizzlers; students told that politically flabby post-New Left bullshit is the way to make sense of 'culture'; academics chasing ever-decreasing funding by publishing in elitist journals with ever-decreasing readerships. . . Defend that crap! Not on your life. Where in all of this is the beautiful savagery of the mind? Learning is no commodity: it's an acid to burn money. It's traced in golden words of fire that fall blazing from the page, flaring and dying as we read



► them, gone in an explosion of unknown suns."

Curiously though, while the *User's Guide* does not neglect surrealism as one of the touchstones of revolt, this piercing SLAG tract goes unmentioned.

While the bulk of the book takes an "art activist" approach to the volatile political landscape of November/December 2010, it does not fail to place such activism in the twentieth century historical context of art and revolution.

It is a history that understands that the radical romanticism of Surrealism was built upon the radical negation of Dada, embracing and then moving beyond it in the first half of that century. As the century continued to unfold, the book moves from the Dutch Provos' white bicycles and the Digger "free stores" of San Francisco to the Situationist-inspired salvos of King Mob in the UK, from the anarchic "gnome" gatherings of the Orange Alternative in Poland to the disruptive anarchist public theatre of the Metropolitan Indians of Italian Autonomia, and onwards from the carnivalesque Reclaim the Streets dance-parties to the technologically savvy hacktivism of the Electronic Disturbance Theatre in the Nineties.

By the early part of the 21st century, widespread UK student unrest boiled over in opposition to proposed educational cutbacks by an austerity-minded government in the face of a banking meltdown that, as many students were quick to point out, was not a crisis that they had caused.

Actions, including vehement protests and building occupations at a number of universities, were initially ignited by the November 10, 2010 trashing of 30 Millbank in Westminster, which houses the headquarters of the Conservative Party, involving serious property destruction and clashes with the police.

These events were followed by the November 24 Whitehall march against fees and cuts which involved a massive student walkout from all educational institutions and an attempted protest march from Trafalgar Square to the Houses of Parliament which the police largely blocked.

Later, on December 9, the date the aforementioned SLAG tract was circulated, students successfully marched from Bloomsbury to Parliament Square, opposite Parliament where they pushed over the metal barriers and occupied the central grassy area of the square. Several thousand demonstrators were kettled and beaten with truncheons by the police.

Elsewhere in Central London, masked rebels

smashed all of the windows on the ground floor of Her Majesty's Treasury. On Regent Street, protesters attacked a limousine carrying Charles, the Prince of Wales, and Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, catching the blue-blooded parasites by surprise on their way to the evening's Royal Variety Performance at the London Palladium.

It was in the December whirlwind of these Days of Action that the slim backpocket-sized *User's Guide* was written by Gavin Grindon and John Jordan. In it, they specifically thank "the crew of the occupied and soon to be occupied art schools who inspired us to get this out."

Like *After The Fall*, it grew directly out of the struggle, but in the case of the *User's Guide*, it specifically showcased the new creative forms of "intervention art" developed by activist-oriented artists. The publication's aim was to introduce such interventionist practices to a larger community making them readily available to rebellious students for tactical discussion and possible inclusion in a direct action repertoire informed by both conflict and creativity. Accordingly, as was *After The Fall*, it too was initially distributed for free as an anti-copyright publication. Though it had its practical side,

**The *User's Guide* is not a road map or instruction manual. It is a match struck in the dark, a home-made multi-tool to help you carve out your own path through the ruins**

the book's intended purpose was not purely functional:

"This guide is not a road map or instruction manual. It is a match struck in the dark, a home-made multi-tool to help you carve out your own path through the ruins of the present warmed by the stories and strategies of those who took Bertolt Brecht's words to heart: 'Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it.'"

More than just a portable recipe book for art activism, the *User's Guide* does not shy away from questioning the pretence of the art world and seeks to locate a politically-engaged art beyond mere representation.

The book draws twenty-first century examples from the anarchy-feminist street art projects of Mujeres Creando in Bolivia, the *escrache*-based exposes of Grupo de Arte Callejero in Argentina, the zany anti-

globalization provocations of the Clandestine Insurgent Rebel Clown Army, the Centre For Tactical Magic's Goldmannesque re-imagining of ice cream vans as vehicles for direct action dispensing not only ice cream but radical literature and gas masks, summit-hopping book blocs marching side by side with black blocs, Yo-mango's subversive assaults on consumer culture in Spain, the fabrication of shields by Climate Camp activists in London which were designed with huge haunting photographs of climate refugees emblazoned upon them so that the TV cameras would catch the police violently striking these faces with their batons, and the corrosively humorous pranks of the Yes Men everywhere.

Here is a book guaranteed to offer food for thought, inspiration and an open invitation to further elaboration.

One such example chronicled within the *User's Guide* emanates from the producers of the book project itself, the Laboratory of Insurrectionary Imagination (Labofii). In 2009, they were invited to hold a workshop on art and activism at the Tate Modern, entitled "Disobedience Makes History," and end with a public performance intervention.

However, unlike some practitioners of "intervention art" who are reluctant to directly take on the art world itself, Labofii did not cringe at biting the hand that feeds them. Once they had accepted the Tate's offer, they were duly informed by email that as a strictly enforced rule no artistic intervention could be made against the museum's sponsors, one of which happened to be British Petroleum.

However, Labofii decided instead to use the email as material for the workshop. Projecting it onto the wall, they asked workshop participants whether they should obey the curator's edict, and deciding not to do so, proceeded to set up an art activist collective with the aim of revealing the Tate's golden handshake deal with the oil barons as a death grip on artistic freedom.

A few months later, the newly established collective poured hundreds of liters of black



# Mexico

From page 36

Mexican-Americans with dual citizenship or persons connected with government operations (U.S. consulates, the CIA). The drug exporters, like the Televisa/government, don't want to bite the hand that feeds them: U.S. citizens are the drug corporations' principal customers.

Although ostensibly privately owned and managed, television in Mexico is intricately interwoven with the federal government. The government has been one of its principal advertisers, promoters and confederates since television wedged its way into Mexican households after World War II.

During the presidential administration of Vicente Fox (2000-2006) the federal government granted monopoly—"duopoly"—rights to Televisa and TV Azteca, the country's two national networks. Collaboration between the duopolers and the government makes it impossible to distinguish who is regulating who. No one really knows to what extent the federal government controls television or to what extent the duopoly controls the federal government.

For a populace that historically has had a high rate of illiteracy and semi-literacy television is a pervasive force. When it is the only source of news and entertainment it becomes so webbed into daily life that it becomes a basic part of existence like buses, electricity, beer.

Mexico's tightly controlled television programming and governmental publicity seldom report anything that doesn't reflect prosperous Mexico filled with happy people. Nor does it detail the government's failures to solve crimes or effectively deal with powerful drug organizations.

During President Calderón's six-year term, the television duopoly consistently aired his boasts about creating jobs, the country's economic solvency and its successes against narcotics commerce, boasts that exaggerated and misrepresented the facts.

When anti-government marches, takeovers of roll booths, environmentalists chaining themselves to trees, hunger strikes to regain employment and blockades of foreign-owned gold-mining contamination appear in news reports they are presented as criminal activities or the work of dissidents attempting to destroy Fantasyland.

The propaganda controlled media glorifies the slaying of drug corporation capos as victories in the war against organized crime despite evidence that six years of military

intervention has increased, not decreased, drug-connected profits, the numbers of individuals participating in the trade and the amount of territory the so-called cartels control.

"How can people believe this b.s.?" I asked a suburban Mexico City video maker.

"They don't," he replied. "They know it's a lie. But the truth has become so mangled it's impossible to sort through it. So most people shrug off what government politicians say. They just try to get through today and see what they have facing them tomorrow."

The greatest danger to this artificial reality is that someone will break through and expose what really is happening. One person—even one small community—disrupting the fantasy can be thrust aside as deviant, ignorant—even criminal—but united protest efforts have to be repressed before they become too strong.

Mexican police and military beat, tortured, raped and arrested hundreds at Atenco in the Estado de Mexico in 2006 and in Oaxaca the same year to prevent anti-administration demonstrations from becoming area-wide or nationwide movements. For nearly thirty years armed military have surrounded the Zapatista communities in Chiapas in southern Mexico to "prevent the cancer from spreading," as one of President Ernesto Zedillo's advisors commented.

A force of over 1,500 state and federal armed military and police violently quashed a student protest in Michoacán in October 2012, beating and arresting hundreds in a state wracked by corruption and drug-related crime. That no equivalent large scale operations had been launched against criminal organizations in that state demonstrated which the governing elite considered to be the greater evil: gangland violence or organized protests. The gangs—the drug-exporting corporations—are part of the status quo, the protesters are not.

Television and most of the rest of the media routinely report anti-government marches, takeovers of toll booths, environmentalists chaining themselves to trees, hunger strikes to regain employment and blockades of foreign-owned gold-mining contamination as criminal activities. They glorify the slaying of drug corporation capos as victories in the war against organized crime despite evidence that six years of military intervention has increased, not decreased, drug-connected profits, the numbers of individuals participating in the trade and the amount of territory the so-called cartels control.

That is not to say that the artificial Mexico created for tourists and residents isn't fragile. The curtain needs to remain in place, the

actors (politicians, television producers and personalities, NAFTA-benefited entrepreneurs, etc.) need to stick to the script. Revelations about the emperor's new clothes have to be repressed or the emperor (those same politicians, television personalities and entrepreneurs) incur drastic income reductions.

In much the same way that slums and poverty-wracked rural villages remain out of sight to visiting tourists, drug commerce-related violence has remained behind the Wizard's curtain. The drug corporation capos and their acolytes have tremendous amounts of cash at their disposal—cash that they invest in so-called legitimate enterprises, including tourist facilities.

Fervent competition to construct larger and more elaborate marinas, beachfront hotels and condominiums, Five-Star resorts and extravagant sports facilities straps available financing: Insertions of ready cash are always highly appreciated. Not only the capos but bureaucracies of underlings associated with them purchase million-dollar homes, airplanes, ranches. They number among the expensive tourist resorts most lavish clients.

"The more money you have the more welcome you are" knits transnational entrepreneurs, drug exporters, tourists and foreign governments eager for oil, gold and silver and lumber with a mythology of Aztec and Mayan heroism, brightly costumed and carefully choreographed traditional dancers, colonial architecture and resort-strewn tropical beaches.

A fairyland of happy people and quaint customs, impressive history and artistic creations that is seventeenth century traditional and luxuriously expensive. It's a show, a costume party, a scripted travelogue: sun, volcanoes, *tlayudas*, tequila, and photo albums.

"The less money we have the less welcome we are." Those of us who live behind the Wizard's curtain, excluded from Fantasyland, numbed by television, cannot eat words, cannot clothe ourselves in propaganda. The wizard is in danger of losing his curtain.

When that happens poverty-ridden Mexico will again be the real Mexico and the tourists will have to see what's really here or pocket their money and go back home.

**Robert Joe Stout** freelances from Oaxaca, Mexico. His books include *Why Immigrants Come to America: Braceros, Indocumentados and the Migra* and *Blood of the Serpent: Mexican Lives*, two novels and hundreds of articles and essays in various publications.





# Toronto's Free School

## It Takes A Community

BY MEGAN KINCH

**A**narchist experiments in education in the Toronto area reflect a history of brief spaces carved out from commercialism, of flowerings of liberation followed by the seeds of the next project to emerge.

Experiments in popular education or free schools have often co-existed with experiments in collective living, and have also been tied to particular waves of activism, following radical Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's theories that liberation education only works when tied to a project of human liberation in general. Anarchist movements in urban areas, like Toronto and nearby cities, thrive in spaces at once marginal and central, and freeschools have emerged along with them.

Some of these projects still live, others have passed on. Anarchist spaces are often temporary, falling slowly to gentrification, eviction or quickly to police repression. If the free schools have also been temporary, they are also signposts pointing to the possibility of the future.

Kalin Stacey, associated with recent freeschool projects in Toronto, connected the idea of physical space and organizing space: "One of the things that's really critical for a freeschool is that it's both a decentralized and learning project, but also a community building project.

The best scenario for an established freeschool that sticks around is to have a radical community centre/social space, autonomous

space that also is sustainable and can provide a meeting place. That's something the anarchist free school that happened in the late '90s in Kensington had that made it really effective. And, when they lost the space, they lost the school."

A tucked away multi-cultural neighborhood of Toronto, Kensington Market had been home in the 1980s to anarchist-influenced punks who fought legendary battles with neo-nazis, often organizing by word of mouth from their base in the market. In the 1990s, the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty fought militant anti-gentrification battles across the city.

Along with this heightened level of political struggle, the anarchist scene also flourished in Kensington, with anarchists bookstores and spaces such as Who's Emma, Uprising, and the Anarchist Free Space, where the Anarchist Free School met. The school faltered, but was quickly re-born as the Anarchist Free University (AFU), one of the Toronto's longest-running anarchist projects.

Illogik, (half of the anarchist rap group, Test Their Logik) was involved in the early 2000s, and says, "The AFU was amazing vibrant when I first got involved; multiple classes each semester, lot of attendance. The AFU led me to Uprising [bookstore] and then to a now-defunct collective house which all spawned many different activities. It got me plugged into the community and once in, the vehicle that got me there was less important."

Maggie, an AFU organizer, noted that freeschool theory needed to be adapted to an urban North American context. She says,

### "A freeschool is a community building project..."

"Freire saw peasant and landowners as the crux of power, it's defiantly a different thing when it's in a society where there's a more urgent understanding of what's wrong which I think is sometimes lacking in north America."

The AFU, which at one point shared a house with Bike Pirates (a radical bike collective), eventually became homeless. Poor and working class people in Kensington began to lose their battles with gentrification, and high rents meant collectives had trouble keeping infoshops or punk venues open. Anarchism went a bit further underground. Without a geographical space or a strong activist movement, the AFU stagnated along with the dispersed anarchist scene in general.

Although the AFU was decentralized and a bit amorphous, one of the central and persisting

figures was a mysterious figure known to everyone as Possum. Science fiction author and blogger, Cory Doctorow described him as the "epitome of happy mutanthood."

A founding member of the AFU, Erik "Possum" Stewart also lived in two important collective houses associated with the free "U." He often preferred to help set up the structure for an open self-regulating system and do the low level maintenance, often in subtle ways helping consensus work or nudging things along, keeping spaces like the Anarchist "U" running.

You could have a deep theoretical conversation about any number of topics with Possum, but never know basic things about him like what he did for a living. It turned out he'd attended a alternative high school called SEED in downtown Toronto, but rejected his diploma in a statement against formalized education. Sadly, this summer, Possum was found dead by his roommates; an autopsy showed that he had a cerebral hemorrhage in his sleep.

New waves of anarchism would arise not out of Toronto itself but from developing scenes in the smaller cities nearby. In Hamilton, an industrial city located an hour to the south-west, a new FreeSkool project was taking off. Peter, one of the founders, told me: "We borrowed the broad concept of FreeSkool, but made up all the details on our own." The project invented its own structure, more organized than the AFU, involving a consensus-based collective of four committed organizers serving 8-month overlapping terms.

The Hamilton FreeSkool also followed Freire's

model of education in connecting courses to praxis, such as the "Radical Practical Solidarity" course that did indigenous solidarity work with the nearby Six Nations of the Grand River, Canada's largest First Nation. Also in line with his model of teaching skills needed for revolutionary organizing was an emphasis on practical skills like language learning.

Niki Thorne wrote her masters thesis on the project, and writes how burn-out from a three-month militant winter strike at Toronto's York University in 2008/2009 was transformed into excitement at the community building possibilities at the Hamilton freeschool.

"In contrast to my terrible strike experience," she writes, "FreeSkool, for me, has always



## Toronto

From page 41

been this warm welcoming inspiring space, a community of caring and creative people, and an example of the concrete beautiful projects and initiatives that we can build out of our ideas and ideals. FreeSkool represents creativity and community, and is part of building the kind of world we want to live in."

Toronto anarchists came together with their comrades from other cities during the 2010 G20 protest there, and brought their slightly different freeschool projects with them. An AFU media course created a team which produced a high-quality independent film of the mobilization, "Tales from the G20." A freeschool on the Hamilton mode, The Toronto Free School, ran for a year or so in the post-G20 period, but faltered because organizing became increasingly centered on defending those arrested in the actions and prisoner support.

In 2011, when Occupy erupted, the continuing popular outrage at police actions during G20 meant that Toronto had a bit more space from state repression than in other cities. The encampment at St. James Park, with its many trees and rolling hills, resembled a kind of anachronistic medieval village, but with electrified committee tents, which were joined by three beautiful Yurts.

Occupy Toronto collectively decided that it should provide food and tents to all, and became a self-organized community service as well as a protest. Unfortunately, the General Assemblies, the decision making bodies for Occupy, were particularly non-functional and were associated with numerous incidents of aggression and violence. In such an environment, it was especially important to create an education project that was embedded in the communal living, semi-intentional community that was set up by Occupy Toronto.

Kalin, who had been part of the post-G20 free school, helped set up the infrastructure along with a few other experienced organizers, so that Occupy FreeSchool was established in such a way that once it was up and running it was mainly self-sustaining. People simply scheduled

classes daily on a whiteboard leaning on the side of the dedicated tent. Many classes went along with organizing projects at Occupy, such as the recurring class on Anarchist Communism that was attended by many of the people involved in community safety in the camp, lending a theoretical basis to the practical work of keeping people as safe and free as possible.

Non-anarchists also appreciated the open structure, setting up courses on recycled paper arts, gardening, and even Marxism. Kalin told me the Occupy Free School, "definitely planted some seeds of interest in that type of education project."

The free education framework persisted even once the camp was evicted although the Occupy community fell apart in exile. Now run by people who learned about freeschools experientially, the Free'scool now meets in a downtown park on Sundays, creating a temporary physical space and evoking memories of the Occupy encampment.

Roxy, one of the new organizers with the Occupy Free'scool says, "We desperately need education that is free for the development of the individual personality. This means education that is culturally relevant, and teaches peace and self-determination."

Illogik says, "Occupy built something that crashed against the walls of the state and then receded;" words that apply in general to anarchist organizing and educational projects in Toronto.

Organically connected with the anti-authoritarian organizing scenes in the city, liberation education has risen and fallen with the tide of militancy in the city. Wrestling physical and organization space from capitalism for the projects we need is a difficult task, but it's one that has to be done as we move forward.

We can't always fight the system head on. We also have to build the systems that sustain ourselves and our struggles as we move out of the margins to really challenge the capitalism and the state.

**Megan Kinch** came to anarchism through the Hamilton FreeSchool, and was involved with the AFU, the Toronto Free School, and Occupy FreeSchool. She is currently involved in building up people's media organizations and is an editor with the Toronto Media Co-op.

## Free

From page 33

change the old paradigm.

Developing children's critical sense allows them to develop independent thinking. Cornelius Castoriadis, a libertarian socialist who was one of the founders of the group, Socialism or Barbarism in 1946 which influenced many anarchists and Situationists, wrote that autonomous thinking is, more than anything, questioning.

According importance to my son's questions (numerous!), taking the time to listen when they're asked (even if I have one foot on a ladder or am absorbed in my book), helping and guiding him in his research, assisting him in his experiments, and seeing his pleasure in validating, invalidating, nuancing, complexifying his solutions and answers—this has given me the privilege of observing the birth and formation of his critical thinking, his personality, his being.

Illich, in *Deschooling Society*, saw the function of alienation in schooling, that is being a prisoner of the scholastic ideology, people renounce the responsibility for their own growth, and this abdication leads to a kind of intellectual suicide.

Creating concrete alternatives to the indoctrination of the official educational system has always been a priority for anarchists. Whether in the area of reflection about education, like Max Stimer and William Godwin, or by experiments by Sébastien Faure, Paul Robin, and Francisco Ferrer, these eloquent examples from the past carry hope for the future.

And, they stimulate us to roll up our sleeves and act.

**Marika Reid-Gaudet** has a background in anthropology and the sociology of education. She is currently the president of AQED (Homeschooling Association of Quebec) and dreams (and works with others dreamers) about having a free school in Montreal.

See [summerhillschool.co.uk](http://summerhillschool.co.uk)

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## William Gibson: unintended prophet of our digital future.



BY PAUL J. COMEAU

For over thirty years William Gibson has been the unintended prophet of our digital future. The award-winning author of *Neuromancer*, *Virtual Light*, and a string of other best-selling science fiction novels, Gibson's writings have not only presaged

### Distrust That Particular Flavor

William Gibson  
G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York  
Hardcover, 259 Pages, \$26.95

the future in many ways, but also serve as critiques on the present in which they were written.

Gibson is credited with coining the term cyberspace, and imagining worlds where the physical and the digital seamlessly overlap. The settings of his novels are often dystopian in nature, filled with corporate conglomerations controlling all aspects of society in not so uncertain terms, and inhabited by individuals trying their best to survive in a world where they are as much products as people. One detects not only echoes of Orwell and Huxley, but also disturbing resemblances to our own current living conditions, which Gibson says is the point of all good science fiction.

With *Distrust That Particular Flavor*, Gibson offers up his first collection of non-fiction writings, assembled from throughout the course of his entire career. These twenty-six essays provide not only a deeper look into the writer and his work, but also offers Gibson's own unique takes on numerous subjects. The touchstone to all of Gibson's writings, fiction and non-fiction, is the idea that we can't even begin to understand society and culture until we understand

technology's role in shaping our culture.

In "Rocket Radio," the first and earliest essay in this collection, published by Rolling Stone magazine in 1989, Gibson takes up this theme, writing, "I belong to a generation of Americans who dimly recall the world prior to television. Many of us, I suspect, feel vaguely ashamed about this, as though the world before television was not quite, well, the world."

"The world before television," he continues, "equates with the world before the Net – the mass culture and the mechanisms of Information. And we are of the Net; to recall another mode of being is to admit to having once been something other than human."

When referring to the Net, Gibson's writing predates the internet as we know it, and isn't meant to include simply the transmitting of information via computer, but meant to encompass the totality of communications technology. "Once perfected, communication technologies rarely die out entirely; rather, they shrink to fit particular niches in the global info-structure," he writes.

This includes not only television and the then burgeoning internet, but even technologies highly archaic at the time of his writing: crystal radios, mimeograph, and crank and dial adding machines. Gibson describes the freedom as a portable battery-powered turntable available to his teenage-self. "This constituted an entirely new way to listen to the music of choice," Gibson writes, "'Choice' being the key word."

In the commentary at the end of the essay, Gibson writes that his take on the idea of the Net was more about "some more abstract expression of the totality of cyberspace," than the actual circuits and wires of the internet, and it is this abstract expression, the putting into words things that feel subtle or otherwise unexpressed, that give all of

Gibson's writings their resonance with the reader.

Much of Gibson's fiction writing is set in a fictional near-future Japan. One of the questions Gibson is most asked by journalists in interviews is why Japan, as opposed to the US, his place of birth, or Canada, his place of residence? Gibson answers that question in several essays in this collection, each time coming back to the touchstone of the intersections between technology and culture.

Many of us like to think that our culture shapes technology to suit its needs, but Gibson points out in "Modern Boys & Mobile Girls," that the reality is actually quite the opposite. "Japan is the global imagination's default setting for the future," Gibson writes.

"The Japanese seem to the rest of us to live several measurable clicks down the timeline. The Japanese are the ultimate Early Adopters, and... if you believe, as I do, that all cultural change is essentially technology driven, you pay attention to the Japanese."

Gibson provides two examples of the rapid embrace of technology by the Japanese, and how their culture, and the rest of the world's culture is shaped by it. The first is the early adoption of text messaging by Japanese school girls, who Gibson dubs "Mobile Girls," as a primary means of communication.

What's striking is that these Mobile Girls took what was then a new minor function of cell phone technology and built a culture around it. "What is it that the Mobile Girls are so busily conveying to one another?" Gibson writes. "Probably not much at all: the equivalent of a schoolgirl's note," he answers.

The second example is the symbol of what launched Japan from the end of its feudal period, and straight into the industrial revolution, and the future. That symbol of technology is the mechanical watch. The watch, the symbol of what came to be known popularly in contemporary Japanese as "Modern Boys," the young generation of European-influenced Japanese who embraced the technological future, and pushed the country to become the first industrialized nation in Asia.

Gibson cites the rapid industrialization of Japan, as the launching point for the Japan of the future. The breakneck pace at which the country industrialized set them on the path to "empire-building expansionist mode,

See **DISTRUST**, page 44



# Distrust

From page 43

which eventually got them two of their large cities vaporized. . . by an enemy wielding a technology that might as well have come from a distant galaxy."

What followed was an aborted attempt at cultural reengineering. "The result of this stupendous triple-whammy, (catastrophic industrialization, the war, the American Occupation)," Gibson writes, "is the Japan that delights, disturbs, and fascinates us today." In the essays "Shiny Balls of Mud," and "My Own Private Tokyo," Gibson further explores the unique aspects of Japanese culture, and the interesting ways in which that culture permeates into the rest of the world's culture. In all of these essays, there is the inkling of the idea of The Future as present. While this phenomenon can be easily observed in Japan, it is happening everywhere, and Gibson addresses the topic in other essays in the book.

In his 2010 talk for Book Expo New York, Gibson grapples with the relationship between history and the Future with a capital F, and the kind of mirror image relationship between them. He laughs off the science fiction critics who declare the future is over. "I wouldn't blame anyone for assuming this is akin to the declaration that history [is] over, and just as silly," Gibson writes.

Instead, what Gibson sets up is the idea that instead of living in The Future, as those of his generation envisioned it, "be it the crystalline city on the hill, or radioactive post nuclear wasteland," he writes, we have reached what he calls a state of "No Future." "Ahead of us, there is merely. . . more stuff. Events. Some tending to the crystalline, some to the wasteland-y."

He goes on to say that what every generation thinks of as their capital-f Future, "We discover it, invariably to be the lower-case now."

This train of thought leads to one of the central concepts behind all of Gibson's fiction, and from his perspective, the central concept behind all the best science fiction: the idea that the best science fiction has always been, under various guises, about the present in which it was written.

This understanding might seem obvious to anyone who thinks of fiction as a tool for political expression. The best art is always commentary upon the present society of the artist who creates it. Gibson cites Orwell's 1984 as an example, and goes on to relate how his own novels, nine of them and counting, each related to the era in which they were written. His breakout novel, 1984's *Neuromancer*, was set in a fictional 2030, and his 1990s trilogy, beginning with 1993's *Virtual Light*, was set in 2006. There's more to fiction than just setting and subtext Gibson notes.

"A book exists at the intersection of the author's subconscious and the reader's response," he writes. "A writer worries away at a jumble of thoughts, building them into a device that communicates, but the writer doesn't know what's been communicated until it's possible to see it communicated." Gibson refers to this as part of the "mysterious business," that is writing fiction, but it's an idea that could be applied to all the arts.

In nearly all of the essays in this book, Gibson touches on autobiographical topics, inserting himself and his own experiences into the narratives. I found this gave many of the pieces an added layer of depth, or provided a bit of grounding context in which to understand the points the author tries to make.

A few purely autobiographical pieces here

provide additional context to Gibson's own life. In "Since 1948," Gibson lays out his personal life and the development, partly out of necessity, of his writing life, and he debunks several myths about himself. "Google me and you can learn that I do it all on a manual typewriter, something that hasn't been true since 1985, but which makes such an easy hook for a lazy journalist that I expect to be reading it for the rest of my life."

He freely admits to avoiding the internet in its early days, but only until "the advent of the Web turned it into such a magnificent opportunity to waste time that I could no longer resist." Gibson talks about his internet explorations in a few pieces, including "The Net Is A Waste Of Time," a short essay written for the *New York Times Magazine* in 1996.

For an essay written in the pre-Google or social media era, Gibson's words are striking. The essence expressed in the piece is it takes a lot of work to waste time on the net, and that the use of the internet what we would normally think of as a leisure activity akin to watching television, actually resembles working. I think any of us whose work involves spending time on the internet would agree with Gibson's assessment, something that has only become truer in the nearly twenty years since.

Ultimately, what *Distrust That Particular Flavor* offers readers is more than just a glimpse into the mind of one of our greatest contemporary writers and cultural analysts. It presents us with a series of challenges to the wired world most of us take for granted, and asks us to pause and consider how our culture got to where it is, and in what direction it might be heading.

When we consider the bleak glossy techno-worlds of Gibson's fictions, his reasoned critiques of our own wired reality strike with even greater force of thought. They're critiques we should all be taking seriously.



## WWAD

### What Would Anarchists Do?

*Anarchy 101*, edited by Dot Matrix, is a crowd-sourced introduction to anarchist ideas. The content comes from the website [anarchy101.org](http://anarchy101.org) which poses and answers ongoing questions it receives. They represent the best responses from dozens of contributors to hundreds of queries about the "Beautiful Idea: this thing called anarchy," as Ardent Press, the book's publisher, puts it. See [ardentpress.com](http://ardentpress.com).

Here's one from the book for *Fifth Estate* readers to ponder; one we've faced in the past. You can mail in your answer either postal, email, or social media, and we may print some of them in our next issue. Short answers, please.

"Would an anarchist bookstore clerk call the cops if the store was being robbed at gunpoint?"



## REVIEW:

## TIME &amp; REALITY

BY PENELOPE ROSEMONT

Leonora Carrington, the great surrealist creator of paintings and stories, is quoted as saying, "The duty of the right eye is to plunge into the telescope, whereas the left eye interrogates the microscope."

Seldom do we find this range of mental experience in writing. But here it is in Miranda Mellis's *None of This Is Real*—part story, part philosophical treatise—beautifully told and masterfully achieved. This fine book contains multitudes of colorful permutations, ever-changing panoramas, magical chance encounters, lucid geographies of the mental experience that underpins the archeology of our identity, our dreams, our everyday life.

The collection begins with the short piece, "Face," in which the teller transcribes her uncontrollable mutability of expression: "... [F]ace moving involuntarily, twitching, leering ... truly a person may become an abyss: I felt it happening to me. My visage became a kaleidoscopic mask; people weren't sure what they were looking at. I could not translate. I felt non-existence encroaching."

These evocative thoughts serve as an introduction to the main story, "None of This Is Real." We begin with a character called "O" and his adventures in everyday life, beginning with a visit to see his mother, Sonia. But who is "O"?

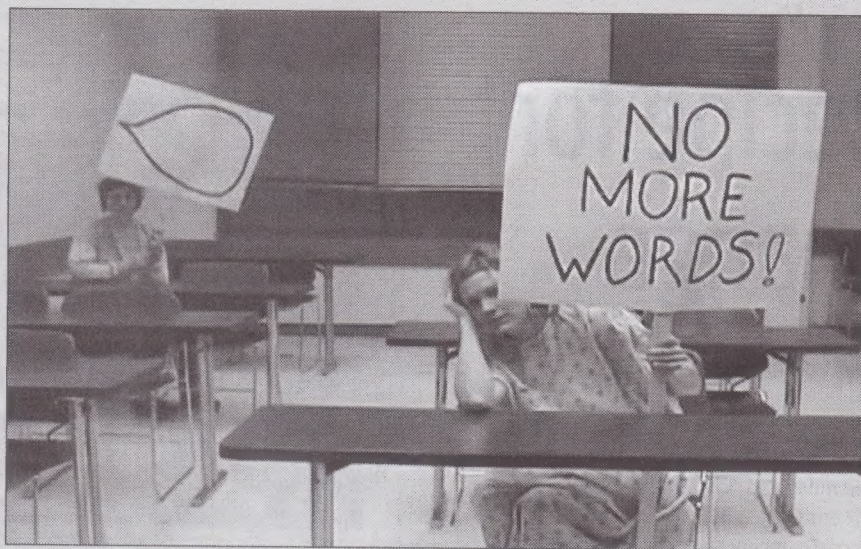
This "O" contains his own despair; he dreams of a vast construction site ...

"[H]e is the only one who realizes that the whole work site is a merely a façade," that what they do is meaningless, building and destroying pointlessly.

We learn about "O"'s disconcerting visit to that palace of commodities, the Mall, and that his mother has presented him with a pillow she made; on it she has embroidered "Life's too Mysterious; Don't take it Serious."

He visits a therapist who offers "customized stability" through "Path to a Position," that is, somatic realism. He recalls wanting to live out his mother's fantasies of him as a great student, and he writes a novel.

Indeed, he had intended to write "an unprecedented, encyclopedic, world-historical novel." But there were so many distractions: "... new techniques in climate change, adaptations, urban agriculture, toxic waste mitigation, soil retention, foreclosure opportunism,

**None of This Is Real**

Miranda Mellis, Sidebrow Books, San Francisco, 2012, 115pp., \$18, sidebrow.net.

oil spill cleanup, sex, and water filtration were considered more pressing than literary innovation. Climate change in particular gave him nightmares."

If he were to describe the novel, it would have been: "post- political, social-realist ... a transnational literary, neoteric, polyphonic Salt of the Earth or a revamped, reflexive, more rounded Life in the Iron Mills, complicatedly dramatizing individual stories behind global struggles to reclaim life's basic necessities which, down to genetic material, were being increasingly privatized ..."

"O" has a filing system and has kept a file of "unbearable correspondences," objective chances in the surrealist meaning of the term, which have confounded his sense of reality. What reality?

"What was the good of imagining reality? And if there is no such thing as time in progress, why keep recapitulating more falsehoods in the form of chronologies ... Knowledge came and went like tides ... Time moved like water."

"O" works in a library. In an especially insightful and humorous passage, a part of the story I particularly loved, because of my fascination with the ideas of William James, "O" is drawn to the self-help section of his library. (I'm fond of these books because you either find some useful information or at the minimum, a good laugh.)

There he discovers "astonishingly the brightly colored titles blaring words like Shame and Anger across the stacks. Occult, illness, dying,

sex, and relationships ... One night he found it in disarray, as though someone had had a paroxysm in the sex and relationship section."

Among the self-help books, the theme that was "especially prevalent was the argument that reality was a product of individual will." In his attempts to piece together an acceptable reality, "O" visits a fortune teller, a doctor at a free clinic, and a zoo elephant. Layers of images provoke further images; the words have a hypnotic magic that is close to musical.

In the story, "The Coffee Jockey," a woman considers that "she was of no use to the world but she found the world very useful indeed. Without the world, she thought, what would I have to look at?"

In "Triple Feature," we consider the movies. The piece reminds us that the mind loves to play, rove though time, and experiment with unrestrained passions: "Her favorites were set in distant places and times. Long-haired barbarians killed monsters and raped women while gods rode on clouds. ... wore hardly any clothing, at most chain mail bras, scandals snaking up their shapely calves and diaphanous veils. ... Zenobia chained to a rock, kidnapped by an enormous lizard."

"Transformer" gives us several keys to earlier mysteries. "... [I]n the old world, a woman asked her daughter to set fire to the woods with her mind." Mellis tells us that, "We live into the future via the shape of a word or letter which becomes



## REVIEW:

# Recipe for Change

BY DAVE NOT BOMBS

Even after three decades of Food Not Bombs (FNB) volunteers sharing meals, smiles and good times with anyone who happens to pass by, the authorities still don't seem very inclined to give members of the direct action anti-hunger group their proper respects.

Earlier this year city governments in Philadelphia and Houston banned their local chapters from sharing food in public, although vocal pushback campaigns eventually forced politicians to back down, at least partially, from their authoritarian decrees. In Orlando, Florida members of the local group are appealing a "Large Group Feeding Ordinance" that has temporarily led them to relocate their food shares in front of city hall.

On May 1, in an apparent effort to justify their laughable decision to put the group on the "terrorist watch list," the FBI arrested several Cleveland FNB volunteers for an alleged bomb plot that's hard to describe as anything but a classic case of police entrapment. [FE Note: see article on the Cleveland 4 elsewhere in this issue.]

Halfway around the world in Minsk, Belarus, fifteen members of the group are now facing trial following a police raid of a charity fundraiser.

It isn't surprising that the organization is facing a wave of repression following the recent emergence of the Occupy Wall Street movement. Food Not Bombs, with its long traditions of feeding the hungry, defending public space, working through consensus and opposing policies which create hunger, poverty and war, can be seen as a model, if not a blueprint for the Occupy Movement.

FNB co-founder Keith McHenry gives a full picture of the Food Not Bombs movement in *Hungry For Peace* that is part cookbook, part history, and part organizing guide.

Of course, clashes with the authorities are nothing new for those involved with Food Not



**Hungry for Peace: How you can help end poverty and war with Food Not Bombs**

Keith McHenry

See Sharp Press, Tucson, 2012, 180pp., \$18.95

Bombs.

In the 1980s, the San Francisco FNB chapter survived a sustained police effort to stomp them out that only ended when the group provided disaster relief in the aftermath of the devastating 1989 earthquake. In 2005 right-wing skinheads martyred FNBER Timur Kacharava in Moscow as he was sharing food. It took a protest of over 3,000 St. Petersburg students to force Russia's President Vladimir Putin to punish those responsible for his death.

Why are people in power so disturbed by movements like Food Not Bombs and Occupy Wall Street? It's really not that complicated. Rich people don't like seeing the homeless and poor gather in public. It disturbs their carefully constructed fantasy world. The well-off would much rather keep the rabble quarantined to some out of the way charity soup kitchen, then come face-to-face with those impacted by the poverty and political disempowerment our society creates.

When people actually put aside their differences and come together to help one another in a spirit of mutual aid, that's even more unacceptable to them. It threatens the legitimacy of our winner-take-all social system and poses alternatives to real social ills like wage slavery and top-down decision-making.

Food Not Bombs in particular is a great example of how to make a different world happen. Despite organized opposition, the

movement has flourished for over thirty years and spread across the globe from Boston to San Francisco to Lagos, Bogata, and even Beijing.

The FNB website ([foodnotbombs.net](http://foodnotbombs.net)) lists more than 600 chapters in over 60 countries around the world, and yet there is no centralized body enforcing mandates to its membership. Instead, the whole philosophy of the group is summed up in three simple rules.

1. The food is vegan or vegetarian and no one is turned away.
2. Each chapter is independent and makes decisions by consensus, a form of universal agreement.
3. FNB is dedicated to nonviolence.

These three principles have allowed the group to persevere throughout all manner of repression and opposition and helped create a worldwide movement dedicated to the idea that the world's resources should be used to feed people and not kill them through wars and militarism.

And, that's good news, because in an era where the world's elites are pushing obscene austerity policies that offer nothing but misery for the world's inhabitants, the relevance of FNB's direct action, egalitarian recipe for change has never been greater.

The book is only \$12 if ordered directly from See Sharp Press: P.O. Box 1731, Tucson AZ 85702 or at [seesharppress.com](http://seesharppress.com). Keith McHenry can be contacted through [foodnotbombs.net](http://foodnotbombs.net).



## Citadals

From page 39

molasses inside and outside the museum during its party in celebration of twenty years of BP sponsorship, which, as objective chance would have it, was being held while oil infamously gushed from the disastrous explosion in the Gulf of Mexico of an offshore BP oil rig.

As this intervention indicates, the *User's Guide* calls for a decommodified art beyond the self-congratulatory cynicism of the art world. In the authors' terms, what is needed is an art which allows us "to find each other amongst the ruins."

Rather than being a "political" art that is safely enclosed in a museum where it becomes "a cool cultural mask over the catastrophe that is capitalism" and "an aesthetic amplifier of the status quo," they championed a disobedient "art that does not show the world to us, but changes it."

The task of radical artists in this regard is to create such art in order to dismantle and reinvent daily life so as to "step into the cracks where another world is coming into view." Beyond the now clichéd bumper sticker slogan, "Another World is Possible," lies the subversive power of impossibility. Or, as some California students so bluntly put it in *After The Future*, "Another world is not possible. It is necessary."

Both artists and university occupiers (two categories that are not mutually exclusive) are urged by the authors to simultaneously refuse the dictates of capitalist state institutions and build places where the subversive power of the imagination can flourish. Ultimately, the goal is not only the abolition of the corporate university, but self-abolition.

As the *User's Guide* explains:

"If you're opposed to the logic of turning art or education into a market, you are already opposed to yourself as defined by that logic: you are not the artist, student or worker that capital needs. This means you have already begun to abolish yourself."

The next step then becomes one of abolishing art itself as a specialized activity that can only be undertaken by university-credentialed art professionals endowed with a closely guarded investment in cultural capital. The burning question of how we

bring to life Lautréamont's prescient watchwords: "Poetry must be made by all," still hangs fire.

In this regard, we must be wary of formulating an unnecessarily heroic vision of the art activist as "engineer of the imagination." In order to avoid the trap of elitism, perhaps it might be useful to envision the "reverse imagineering" practices of pirating, appropriating and recreating in a fluid bottom-up context.

If professionalism is rooted in the idea of monopoly, then the sharing of the stories, ideas and tactics of art activism in the manner of the *User's Guide*, is, at its heart, a de-professionalization project. As such, it was undertaken not to glamorize a new brand of activist art stars, but to freely disseminate the aesthetics and skills of politically-engaged art activism so that others might feel inspired to pick up the torch and run with it. Rather than the cultivation of celebrity and audience passivity, the assumption at work here is that creative participation is the key to opening the floodgates of the radical imagination.

In a closing note, written in an explicitly surrealist context, the authors expound upon the complex nature of "demanding the impossible" that is so crucial to their project. In doing so, they redefine hope in the non-messianic immediacy of not knowing what will happen next and echo the concerns of the California student occupation statements in *After The Fall*:

"Some might decry us as naïve romantics, utopian dreamers, but we know that to limit demands to what seems 'realistic' is a guaranteed way of reducing what is possible. Protest is beautiful because it breaks open the routines of space and time, to allow the unimaginable to flourish, its beautiful because at its heart is hope, hope that, as the Surrealists understood so deeply, dream and action can be reunited."

**Ron Sakolsky** spent eight years as a radical student dodging/resisting the draft while enrolled in New York City colleges, universities and graduate schools in the 'Sixties, and the next 30 years teaching anarchy while shoveling shit against the tide in interdisciplinary and experimental learning programs in the private and public university trenches of New York City; Utica, New York; Springfield, Illinois; Olympia, Washington, and post-apartheid Durban, South Africa.

## Time & Reality

From page 39

the geography—imaginary at first—of our destination." Is this a clue to the identity of "O"?

We began with a character named "O" on a visit to see his mother. "O" has multiple associations and already my mind rushes off. I recall the *Story of O* by Pauline Réage (Anne Desclos) still unexcelled as a tale of pleasure through absolute sexual submission, but this "O," Millis's character, is masculine. . .but is our self, still.

Then, I remember "O" for Orlando, the tale well-loved by me as a teenager written by Virginia Woolf, of the character whose sex changes though each of his historical incarnations. Or, maybe "O" is for the cipher or zero, the numeral invented by Leonardo Fibonacci in 1202.

Who is "O"? I think of openness, orbit, ontology; I think of Ocean, of Orion, of Orchids, of the Oneness of oscillating obsessions of Orion's orchard of orgasmic orchids. The mind is such a strange place.

What this fine book, full of the secrets of our subterranean existence, has done is disassemble us into small pieces and then reconstruct us as characters with x-ray vision. History, memory, in their protean mutability, is one of my concerns as is the liberation of our dreams and the reconstruction of daily life with the inspiration of surrealism.

In this book, the Mechanics of the Universe collide with personal historical forces and with Archimedes, we ask, "only give me a place to stand and I will move the Earth."

But one of most provocative of all the statements, I think, is the woman's advice to her daughter in the story, "Transformer." . .[A]fter all it is your choice what you do in life, will you set fire to the wood, the world, with your mind. "Do or do not. There is no try."

**Penelope Rosemont** met with André Breton and the Paris surrealist group in 1965-66. She edited *Surrealist Women: An International Anthology*. Her latest book is a memoir, *Dreams & Everyday Life: André Breton, Surrealism, Rebel Worker, sds & the Seven Cities of Cibola*, Charles H. Kerr, publisher.



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